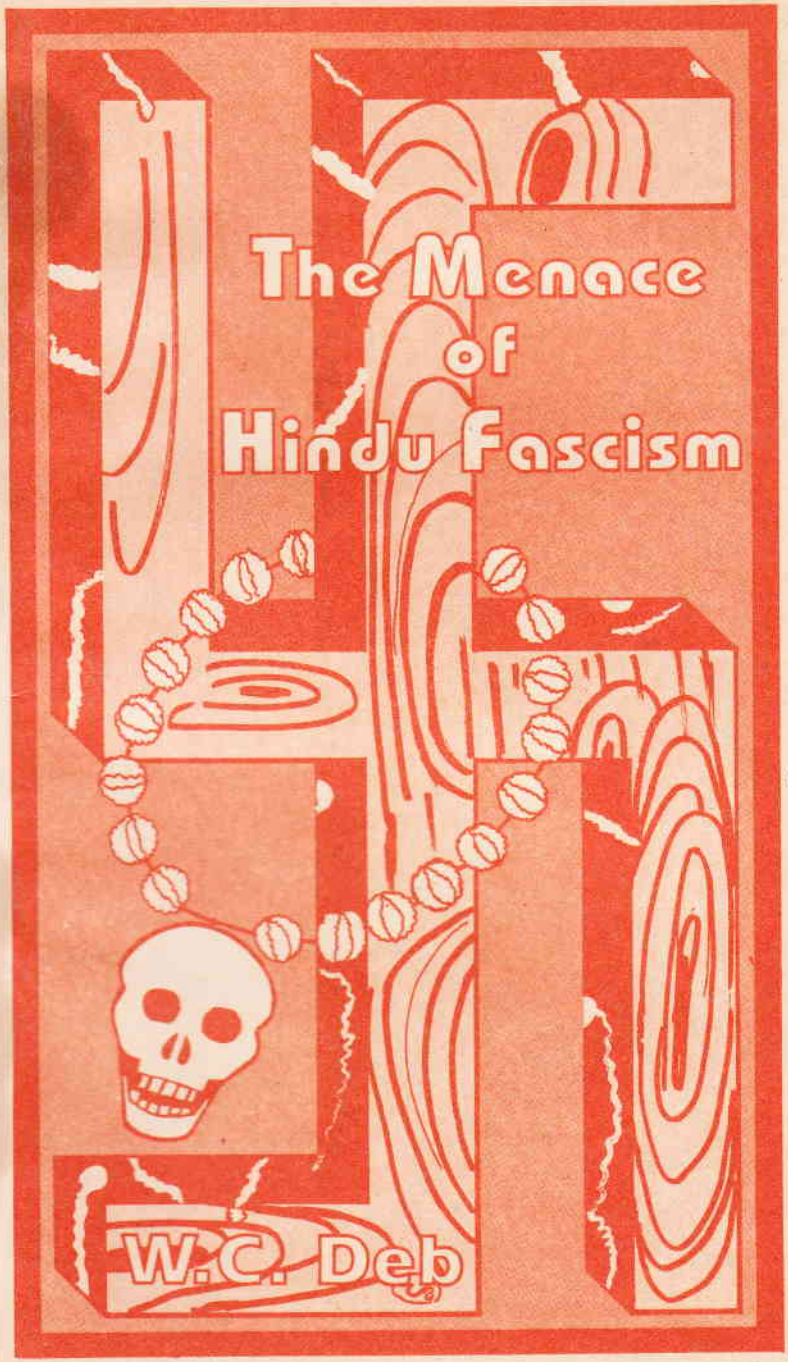
The Menace of Hindu Fascism



W.C. Deb

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W.C. Deb

Progressive Publications
New Delhi
6 December, 1995

Dedicated
to those who are committed
to serve the people

Acknowledgment

I am very grateful to Shri B.N.Chakravorty. The 'Preface' of the book is the product of his erudite composition.

For Copies :

Dr. W.C. Deb
A-42, Chittaranjan Park
New Delhi-110 019

Price :
Hardbond : Rs. : 25/-
Paperback : Rs.: 15/-

Printed at : Shakti Offset Press, Delhi-32

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"'No religion teaches enmity against another religion.' This is undiluted untruth-a lie without limits. If religion does not teach hostility, why should our country be tormented even today, by constant conflicts between those who flaunt a beard and those who wear a tuft of hair on their head? Leave aside ancient history; look at the towns and villages even of today's India - Are not men of one religion instigated to spill the blood of men of another faith? Who is creating conflicts between those who eat the cow's meat and those who take cow dung? The simple fact is that it is religion itself that teaches that adherents of one faith must fight those of another; brother is incited to taste the blood of brother. The unity of Indians will have to be built on their ruins. You can not make a swan out of a crow however much you may wash it. Religion is a very common disease. But it has no remedy other than eradication."

-Rahul Sankrityayan (Natun Manav Samaj, p.19)

I shall tell the truth, O Brahmin, but take it not as an offence:
The idols in thy temples have decayed,
Thou hast learnt from these images to bear ill will to thine own people,
And God has taught the (Muslim) preacher the ways of strife.
My heart was sick: I turned away both from the temple and the Ka'abah
From the sermons of the preacher and from thy fairy tales, O Brahmin
To Thee images of stone embody the divine—
For me, every particle of my country's dust is a deity,
Come, let us remove all that causes estrangement,
Let us reconcile those that have turned away from each other, remove all signs of division.

—Mohammad Iqbal (The Indian Muslims, p.485)

PREFACE

The demolition of the Babari Masjid on December 6, 1992 by a Hindu mob (Karsevaks!) driven to frenzy by the BJP and its cohorts was an ominous event with a mischievous foreboding. In political significance, this unprecedented crime perpetrated under the guidance of political leaders is quite different from the destruction of numerous temples by the Muslim rulers in the medieval period of Indian history.

The sinister aspect of the affair was the collusion between the ruling Congress party and the BJP, the principal Parliamentary opposition party, both formally pledged to uphold the secular and democratic republic. L.K.Advani of the BJP has aptly uncovered the ugly truth: "The Congress wanted the demolition and they had it done by us."

The linkage between the so-called nationalist Congress and the Hindu communalist groups has its roots in the past. It had been there even before the Hindu Mahasabha was set up as an All India organisation by uniting several Hindu organisations - Dharma Sangraksini Sabha of Sanatani Hindus, Brahmo Samaj and Arya Samaj.

In fact, two of the three eminent Congress leaders-Lal, Bal, Pal were rank Hindu communalists. Lala Lajpat Rai's vision of free India was that of two separate states for Hindus and Muslims. Bal Gangadhar Tilak went all out to Hinduise the nationalist movement by introducing on a national scale Hindu festival like Ganesh Puja. The more perceptive of the trio - Bipin Chandra Pal was an exponent of 'composite nationalism'.He observed in 1916: "Nor can the Indian nationalists absolutely absolve themselves of all responsibility for this unfortunate state of things (the opposition of the Muslims to the national movement). If the Moslem leaders tried to wipe out the memories of the Sikhs and Marathas, the Hindu national leaders also sought to revive them. It was no doubt a supreme psychological need of the nationalist

propaganda and so far as these memories were revived to recreate the self-confidence of people suffering from a hopeless and listless inertia, they did only good and no harm. But the effect of the revival did not stop here. It gradually awoke, at least in a section of nationalists, *the foolish and suicidal ambition of once more re-establishing either a single Hindu state or a confederacy of Hindu states in India. Some people thus secretly interpreted Swaraj as a Hindu raj.*" (Nationality and Empire, pp.388-89)

On the other side, Veer Savarkar, the principal ideologue of Hindu Mahasabha, while in jail in 1923 wrote a book (hand written manuscript) titled "Hindutva - what it means"; in it he described Hindu as a 'nation'. He also raised the slogan "Hinduise politics, Militarise Hinduism." Golwalkar, the chief of the RSS declared in clear language the objective of establishing a 'Hindu Rastra' on the model of Nazi Germany under Hitler. He has not been repudiated, rather all the activities of the present day RSS Parivar are aimed at the establishment of a fascist Hindu raj. Uma Bharati, a BJP M.P. in a speech said: "Declare without hesitation that this is a Hindu Rastra, a nation of Hindus!"

It is not surprising that the present Congress government operating from a position of weakness should join hands with Hindu fascist forces. Without this, it fears it can not remain in power.

It is a dark picture. It looks as if a spectre is haunting India—the spectre of Hindu fascism. There is no room for complacency. Our task is to fight this menace.

INTRODUCTION

Born and brought up in a village with an almost equal number of Hindus and Muslims, I became actively involved in the Referendum meant to determine whether my district of Sylhet (then a part of Assam) should go to Pakistan or Indian Union. My presence in Dacca as a teacher in the Dacca Medical college from 2nd January 1948 to 8th September, 1950 also helped me study Hindu-Muslim relations from close quarter. I had the privilege of being present in the Gazetted officers meeting as well as the public meeting at Dacca addressed by Jinnah. In both the meetings, a section of the audience protested against the imposition of Urdu as the sole state language for entire Pakistan. In India, Urdu is regarded as the language of the Muslims by the Hindu communal forces of both Congress and BJP ! The Bengali Muslims asserted their Bengali identity ignoring the religious bond of Islamic brotherhood thereby disproving the validity of the theory of nationhood on the basis of religion. The struggle for freedom from the domination of West Pakistan resulted in the establishment of the sovereign state of Bangladesh in which Bengali language derived from Sanskrit has been made the state language and the national song as the one composed by the Hindu poet Rabindra Nath Tagore ! In fact, there is a better song composed by Kazi Nazrul Islam to be the national song (anthem) for Bangladesh.

During and immediately before the Partition of India and the Referendum, Hindu-Muslim confrontation assumed violent form. In East Pakistan, in February 1950, there was communal riot lasting for two and half days. Bengali Hindus were killed by the Muslims of Bihar, not of East Pakistan! Bengali Muslims of Dacca no doubt, forcibly took possession of houses owned by Bengali Hindus. These houses were locked, not rented to Bengali Muslims. Such was the relation between

Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims in East Pakistan. English-speaking Bengali Hindus, almost all migrated to Indian Union. They did so only out of apprehension of being dominated by the Muslims. For Partition of India, the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah is responsible but for the partition of Bengal, Bengali Hindus are to be blamed.

During the Referendum, Hindus of Sylhet district under the leadership of the Indian National Congress bribed Muslims for votes in favour of India but all the Muslims without exception voted in favour of Pakistan. This happened despite the month long propaganda of CPI in favour of India. The communists argued that democratic movement being weaker in Pakistan there is little likelihood of the abolition of landlordism. That the Muslims of Sylhet wanted freedom from Hindu domination was revealed to me by the sincere expression of a landless Muslim peasant of my village (an ardent supporter of CPI): "We know fully well that in Pakistan there would be no abolition of landlordism, no improvement of our economic status, but this time there should be a Muslim Badshah!"

For historical reasons, economic and educational status of the Hindus and the Muslims was strikingly dissimilar; the poorest Hindu in my village was richer than the richest Muslim. Out of eight of us, students of the same class in the primary school, there was only one Muslim who gave up studies when he was a student of class III ! Illiteracy always results from economic deprivation. The land-owners and money-lenders in Bengal were almost all Hindus whereas the landless agricultural labourers were mostly Muslims. Not a single Muslim in my village owned cultivable land; all were agricultural labourers. In the field of education, the gap between the Bengali Hindus and Bengali Muslims was as that between the years 1817 (Hindu school at Calcutta) and 1926 (Sadat college). In view of such disparity, the relation between

the urban middle class Hindus and the Muslim counterparts could not possibly be cordial.

In the rural areas, the two communities belonging to the same village used to live as two distinctly separate entities having very little or no social and cultural communications. Even following the death of a member of one community, hardly any member of the other community ever went to console the members of the bereaved family. Hindu-Muslim unity found expression only in the support for the village football team ! Inspite of such relation,there had been no communal riot in villages. In colonial India riots were mostly restricted to urban areas where the population was victim to the separatist propaganda of the political leaders. In pre-Partition India it was only in Bihar thousands of rural Muslims were slaughtered by the Hindu mob, in retaliation of the Noakhali (Bengal) riot. Even the post-demolition riots were mostly in urban areas. This fact provides some hope in an otherwise hopelessly despairing situation in the country. The relationship between Hindus and Muslims were, however, not cordial.

The political line of Hindu communal organisations like Hindu Mahasabha and Jana Sangh had been to an extent moderate and liberal whereas that of the RSS Parivar (BJP, VHP and Bajrang Dal) and Shiv Sena in particular is rabidly anti-Muslim. Following the assassination of Gandhiji on 30th January 1948, the RSS had been in disarray; its offices were raided, the saffron brigade was hounded by the protesters (mostly Hindus) against the heinous crime. Though banned, the RSS was lying low; it did not disband itself. The Jana Sangh, following the death of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji continued under the leadership of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya but ultimately merged with the Janata Party. Thrown out of Janata Party, the Jana Sangh took the new name of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under the leadership of Atal Behari

Bajpai with Gandhian socialism as the objective. The new party acted as the political wing of RSS. In addition to BJP, two other organisations, avowedly non-political, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal were floated to carry out the nefarious task of pogrom against the Muslim minority who were in no way supporters of Pakistan formation.

On April 7 and 8, 1984 the VHP sponsored the 'Dharm Samsad' at a meeting held at the Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, giving a call to liberate the Ram Janmasthan i.e., demolish the Masjid. The April 1984 issue of 'Uttar Pradesh', the Hindi organ of the U.P. Government's Information Department wrote:" In 1528 Babar came here (Ayodhya) and stayed for a week. *He got the Janmasthan demolished and got a mosque constructed in his name at the same site from the material of the demolished temple"* ! Such distorted propaganda and presentation of unproven facts were used by the VHP as the ideological basis to demand that Babari Masjid be converted into Ram Janmasthan temple. Within a few months of this publication by the Congress Government of U.P (Prime Minister being Indira Gandhi) the VHP formed 'Dharam Mukti Yagna Samiti' which pledged to demolish 450 mosques and convert them into temples. In October, 1984 the Ram Janam Bhoomi Action Committee launched the 'tala-kholo' (open the lock) movement and 'Ratha Yatra' was organised throughout U.P. to spread anti-Muslim crusade. In response, Babari Masjid Action Committee (BMAC) was formed to whip up communal hysteria among the Muslims. Thus two war camps were set up.

On the occassion of the 2nd anniversary of the demolition, there is no sign of repentance on the part of RSS Parivar. The VHP and Bajrang Dal have announced that they will not allow Namaz (permitted by the Supreme Court) to be held at the site of Babari Masjid. Rather they arrogantly invited Muslims to satisfy the urge to pray "by paying obeisance

before the idol of Rama" inside the makeshift temple ! RSS chief Raju Bhaiya said recently that in the interest of communal harmony, Muslims should voluntarily offer the mosques at Benaras and Mathura for destruction! Vinay Katiyar, President of Bajrang Dal says: "No future scenario will be complete without freeing the Kasi and Mathura shrines."

Communalism has been a problem in our country for many years. *Yet the 80's will go down in history as the decade in which Hindu communalism was transformed into Hindu fascism aimed at the establishment of Hindu Rastra.* The Hindu communal force organised in RSS Parivar are getting increasing mass support and have, in consequence, grown more and more belligerent and aggressive. *The most alarming fact is the increasing support from the state machinery.* The partisan attitude of the state is revealed by the following facts:

1. On December 29, 1949 a magistrate issued an order not restoring the possession of the Babari Masjid to the Muslims but appointed a receiver to prevent "breach of peace" and also ordered attachment of the said building and prohibited Namaz there.

2. The agreement between Buta Singh, the then Home Minister and the VHP allowed Ram Shila Puja to go on all over the country. The foundation stone of the new temple would be laid at some distance away from the mosque. But there is no undertaking that the Babari Masjid would not be sought to be demolished subsequently.

3. On November 1, 1989 S.S Bhandari, Vice President of BJP claimed *"Whatever is happening in Ayodhya is with the full knowledge and approval, both legal and administrative, of the state government"!*

4. In post-demolition Bombay riots, the number of Muslims killed by police firing far exceeded the number killed by Hindu rioters.

5. Inspite of the approval of the National Integration Council to take action to protect the Babari Masjid, the Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao did not take any precautionary measure to protect the Masjid. Even after being informed of the beginning of the destruction at noon, he called the Cabinet meeting at 6 p.m. when the demolition was complete!

6. Instead of telling about the promised rebuilding of the mosque, Prime Minister is concerned about the construction of the temple at Ayodhya.

7. BJP's slogan was *"Andar ki baat hai, police hamara sath hai"*.

8. Justice Bharucha and Justice Ahmadi commented about the Reference to the Supreme Court by the Government of India as *"motivated favouring one community against another community"*.

In the last general election, the share of the Congress(I) in the popular vote has fallen by 11.6 percent since 1989, while that of the BJP has dramatically risen from 11.6 percent to 20.31 percent in 1991. In the recent Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, the Congress(I) has been routed out whereas BJP has become the leader of the opposition in Karnataka winning 40 seats while Congress(I) got only 35 seats. Obviously the prospect of the Congress(I) being routed out in the next Parliament election is very real. Consequently BJP's strength would be enhanced.

The threat of establishment of Hindu Rastra is not just an apprehension. The third force consisting of National Front and Left Front is as yet not adequately organised to have majority in the Parliament. In a way, these two fronts together constitute quite a formidable force to prevent the BJP getting the majority in the next Parliamentary election. Unfortunately the record of this force in the V.P. Singh government is not encouraging. *Derecognition of political parties guilty of using religion in politics will go a long way to curb Hindu fascism.*

Religion and Secularism

Religion is divisive. Because each religion considers itself the best and truest and treats all other religions as unholy and barbaric. How can there be a meeting ground for all religions? The prophets and priests thrive on disunity as it helps them retain their power. Gods also abhor unity in mankind as it may make man equal to Gods.

Religion is an all pervasive and deep-rooted system of regimentation. Questions are serious aberrations and anathema to God. Disobedience is the worst sin. In the discovery of truth without reference to God and religion, man became aware of his own rights and responsibilities which led to the emergence of conscience as an important factor in all moral decisions. *Reason is now a rival to God.*

Humanism asserts that the only identity of a human being is that of a man. This identity is supreme and indivisible. Man's sovereignty can be sustained if this identity is accepted. *Religion, on the other hand, identifies man as obedient to God with no sovereignty of his own. Thus religion is dehumanising too.* Otherwise, how Hinduism could identify millions of human beings as untouchables!

No religion can survive without a strong fundamentalist core of privileged identity that gives to its followers a sense of pride in belonging to the chosen, blessed ones. This sense of superiority is the source of intolerance and hatred for people having faith in other religions. Both Christianity and Islam provided inspiration for crusades against the infidels. The present day RSS Parivar is engaged in a sort of crusade against the Muslim minority, with the objective of establishing Hindu Rastra.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines secularism as "the doctrine that morality should be based solely in regard to the well-being of mankind in the present life, *to the exclusion of all considerations drawn from belief in God or future life".*

"In fact, secularism places man at the centre of all his activities. *It makes him independent of God and religion.* It makes all value systems originate from man, exclusively concerned with life in this world. *Secularism is therefore an attribute of humanism which proclaims sovereignty and holds that man is the measure and master of his own destiny.* In secularism, there is no room for religion. But in our Constitution, special provisions relating to religion still exist. By secularism, Constitution of India means "equal respect for all religions"!

Participating in the debate on the Hindu Code Bill Dr. B.R. Ambedkar explained the concept of secularism enshrined in the Constitution as follows: "It does not mean that we shall not take into consideration the religious sentiment of the people. All that a secular state means is *that this Parliament shall not be competent to impose any particular religion upon the rest of the people".* Was the threat of the imposition of Hindu Rastra anticipated?

Religious communalism in our country was first mothered politically by the Hindu Mahasabha, not by the Muslim League. Even Gandhi saw nothing wrong in anyone wearing his religiosity on his sleeves and attempting to inspire others through it to join the struggle to free India from her shackles of bondage. He found merit in every religion. *Thus he may not be communal but was certainly not secular.* It is probably Gandhi's views on religion that was responsible for the meaning accorded to secularism in the Constitution.

The Congress is rightly accused of 'pseudo secularism'; it does appease Muslim fundamentalists, not the Muslim masses. The Congress government is guilty of unleashing fascist terror on the Muslims in Kashmir in the name of defending the integrity and sovereignty of the nation against Muslim belligerence. Unless the rulers of the state become truly secular, uninfluenced by any religious faith, there will be no end to favouring one community against another.

Hinduism and Nationalism

It may sound strange but it remains a fact of history that we became 'Hindu's since the Muslims of foreign origin (Mlecchas) began to call us so. The religious faith of Hindus came to be known as Hinduism and the land inhabited by Hindus as Hindustan. This nomenclatur was also of Muslim orgin. The Hindu communalists, however call it as 'Hindusthan'!.

It is interesting to note that following the Aryan invasion the indigenous Dravidian population who had to retreat to Southern part of the country not only embraced the religious faith of the invading Aryans but also preserved it in its original pristine form known as Brahminism.

In ancient India, apart from the Dravidians and the Aryans there were people of many other races who were also, in the course of time, assimilated into the Hindu community. *Thus Hinduism, while providing India with a base for cultural unity also constitutes its greatest weakness.*

The priestly class of Hindu community- the Aryan rulers devised a strategy by which they maintained domination over the non-Aryan toiling masses through the institution of 'Chatur Varnasram'- a hierarchial division of the society into four categories with specific functions. Hinduism teaches only submission to almighty God and endurance of vagaries of nature as well as of unjust social oppression and economic exploitation. To a Hindu, father in the family, Guru (teacher) in education and the head of the Panchayat in the countryside are all venerable like God. Chained to the past, with tradition of ancestor worship, a Hindu, a member of a particular caste, with prohibitions of intermarriage and interdining and a member of joint family providing no scope for development of independent rational outlook is very much *prone to be conservative* in his outlook. His vision is circumscribed within

the caste group. He can not be generous towards Hindus outside his own caste, not to speak of the Muslim minority.

The caste division is the single greatest hindrance to class unity. 'Chatur Varnasram' of Hinduism does not subscribe to the concept of equality. Unequal status of human beings in the society are creations of Brahma—the Creator! Greek philosopher Plato gave a clear-cut expression of the idea: *"Men are born as masters and as slaves!"* With Shastra-sanctioned inequality, there can be no real unity in the Hindu community.

The system of specific function encompassing every human activity promoted a society stagnant but secure! The ruling castes accepted as proper their superiority and the privileges which accompanied it. They believed their power to be not only necessary but right. The irony consists of the fact that those whom the ruling class ruled generally shared the belief. The rebellion against oppression is not only dangerous but sinful, carrying consequences far beyond the grave. The hierarchical dispensation of Hinduism has survived every buffeting. For example, Buddhism promoted by the throne itself during the reign of Asoka had collapsed speedily.

Indian nationalism began to develop only with the British conquest. Indian resistance against the foreign British imperialism began practically from 1760. Mir Kasim lighted the torch of resistance. In 1763, the Nawab promulgated a 'firman' abolishing all internal trade duties in Bengal Subah so that Indian merchants could compete with British merchants on equal terms. The result was the Buxar war in 1764; the troops of Mir Kasim, Nawab Wazir of Awadh and the fugitive emperor of Delhi Shah Alam II were defeated by the British. Hyder Ali and his son Tipu Sultan were the main obstacles to the expansion of British empire in South India. Tipu Sultan tried to modernise economy and military power and took help of the French. He died in the battle against British

imperialism. Thus he was the first martyr of Indian origin. The resistance was continued by a heroic peasant woman of Sangoli - *Rayamma* and the peasants carried on the revolt in the countryside for three years. After that only, she died in the battle-field!

In the 19th century, the 'Extremists' of the Indian National Congress looked to indigenous heritage for the development of Indian nationalism and sought to rely on a reinvigorated and aggressive Hindusim rather than on constitutionalism and liberalism of the West. Yet *they did not advocate the formation of theocratic state.* But the association of nationalism with Hindu Gods and heroes made nationalism at once popular with the Hindus and did give rise to misgivings in the minds of Muslim middle class. Ganesh Puja in Maharastra was made a national festival and nationalist revolutionaries used to take oath in the name of goddess Kali!

Savarkar formulated a two-nation theory much before Jinnah. In his address as the President of Hindu Mahasabha in 1937, he said: *"India can not be assumed today to be a unitarian and homogenised nation, but on the contrary, there are two nations in the main, the Hindu and Muslim India".* Again he said: *"there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India".*

We often under-estimate the damage done by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, the author of 'Vande Mataram' song towards Indian nationalism. Reviewing his 'Ananda Math', Ramesh Chandra Dutt wrote: "But though the 'Ananda Math' is in form an apology for the loyal acceptance of British rule, it is nonetheless inspired by the *ideal of restoration, sooner or later of a Hindu Kingdom in India.* This is especially evident in the occasional verses in the book, of which 'Vande Mataram' is the most famous".

Thus, in Bengali literature the poison of religious nationalism was first pioneered by Bankim Chandra

Chattopadhyaya. In 'Baboo-Brittanta', Samar Sen rightly pointed out: "There is another surprising fact - even the Naxalpanthis did not make adverse criticism of Bankim Chandra! "The second half of the 19th century was a period of search and revaluation in India. There had been a search for an *official language which might reflect the Hindu ethos and Hindi was a child of this need.* Literature and history were written to glorify the past particulary the ancient period when India or Bharat was ruled by Hindu kings. While the liberal elite wanted rule by the law of a secular Constitution, others had dangerous ambitions.

The communal view assumed that Indian society was divided into homogeneous religious communities which shared common economic, political, social and cultural interests. This view was created and propagated by the British rulers with ulterior motive. Communal ideology and politics emerged simultaneously with the emergence of modern politics based on generating public opinion, popular participation and mass mobilisation.

Communalism had been a product of colonial society. As a policy, British imperialists generated it but was sustained and aggravated by the keen competition for jobs and political positions between Hindus and Muslims. The first important event that generated communal tension in Indian society was when the language of administration was changed from Persian to Urdu at lower level courts.

When Lord Ripon introduced the Local Self-Government Bill in the Council, Sir Syed Ahmed said: "The system of representation by election, in countries where the population is composed of one race and one creed, is no doubt the best system that can be adopted. But, my lord, in a country like India where caste distinctions still flourish, where there is no fusion of various races, where religious distinctions are still violent, where education, in its modern sense has still not made

an equal or proportionate progress among all sections of the population, I am convinced that *the introduction of the principle of election, pure and simple, (to) the local boards and district councils would be attended with evils of great significance. ....The larger community would totally override the interests of the smaller community....*and the measures might make the differences of race and creed more violent than ever". (The Making of Pakistan, pp 34-38). Sir Syed was prophetic.

Government's attitude and practice encouraged the people to view themselves in categories, to compete with other, and try to secure official support for the reservation of larger share of national cake for members of their respective religious or caste groups as against member of other groups.

The challenge of 1920's produced a zealous search for a 'pure' nationalism. Earlier an Indian was a Hindu or Muslim, a Bengali or a Maharastrian, a Tamil, a Malayali etc. The real life social being was kept at a greater distance by the new kind of nationalist for whom Indian is an Indian, nothing more. Even Lajpat Rai declared: "India is neither Hindu nor Muslim. It is not even both. It is one. It is India"

Among the Hindu middle class during the second half of 19th century, the national consciousness was totally vitiated by religious communalism. Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutta rightly said: "Hindus did not differentiate between love for the country and love for the religion and consequently religious influence on nationalism did cause great harm to the greater interest of the country."

The same is true for the Muslim community. The Muslims differentiated between the two so much that they did not see their homeland as their motherland. Being resident of India, they refused to recognise the Indian tradition and heritage ! They looked for their heritage in Arabia, Turkey and Persia !

In the national liberation movement against British imperialism, religious communalism is nothing but an

aberration of Indian nationalism. Unable to become inheritor of the same heritage and tradition of India, Hindus and Muslims could not go together in the freedom struggle. National organisation remained essentially a Hindu organisation despite the fact that the two top leaders - Gandhi and Nehru were non-communal.

Historical Development of Hindu-Muslim Confrontation

Religious communalism in our country had its beginning along with religious identification at the political level in the 13th century when the Muslims of foreign origin established their rule over our ancestors. The first Muslim foreigners coming to India were, however, merchants with no political intent. From 8th century onwards, the Malabar coast of modern Kerala became host to them. Those Arabs settled permanently in India and were welcomed by the then Hindu rulers. They were provided with trading stations and allowed to practice their religious faith in Islam. *Devi Anupama built as many as 84 mosques for them and Yadurana helped the Persians who had to flee from their home land, in settling in Gujarat by providing land and shelter.* Obviously, the relation between the Muslims and Hindus was without any bitterness towards each other. Tolerance towards the foreigner Muslims was dictated by trade interest.

The situation was changed when the Turkish raiders conquered Indian territories and established themselves as the rulers. Hindus, particularly those belonging to the dispossessed ruling class and their satellites began nourishing most intense spite against the Muslims in general. In the social sphere, they propagated surreptitiously contempt, if not hatred towards the Muslims. Among the Hindu masses the feeling of antipathy towards the Muslims was aggravated when the temples were destroyed, idols were broken and wealth in them was looted. In addition to these crimes, some of the Muslim rulers indulged in the seizure of the Hindu women. `Jaharbrata' of Rajput women (suicide by burning) generated in Hindu mind, most intense hatred towards the Muslim rulers and deep respect for the self-immolating women. The other insult to the psyche of Hindu masses was the imposition of penal taxes like 'Jizia'

and 'Methot' (tax for pilgrimage) exclusively on the Hindus. Economic exploitation by the Muslim rulers did not provoke unrest or rebellion against them.

The Muslim conquerors differed from the indigenous population in religion, manners and customs. The advent of their rule did not bring about any basic change in the social life of the country or the Hindu subjects except that Hindu marriage celebrations in Northern and Eastern India began to be performed in the night and the Hindu married women took to the practice of covering face with veil. The introduction of new elements, however, modified Indian culture. By the living together there evolved a new *Hindusthani way of life.*

The Hindus, as subjects of Muslim rulers, did not suffer any remarkable social humiliation. However, the class differentiation associated with feudal society was very much there. As before, the Brahmins worked as teachers, administered Hindu personal laws and enjoyed all the privileges due to them traditionally. They were even exempt from the 'Jizia' tax except during the reign of Feroze Shah Tughlak and Aurangzeb. The Kshatriyas lost a large part of their dominions especially in Northern India. Most of the independent Rajas, Rais and Zamindars belonged to this caste. They reluctantly paid government dues and fought against the Sultan to safeguard their interests, position and prestige. The Vaisyas were quite well off. The Sudras and Untouchables continued to suffer from disabilities and indignities as before. Islam did not attach any stigma to untouchability and conversion to Islam offered only the opportunity of emancipation from upper caste, particularly, the Brahmin tyranny and atrocity.

Conversions were mostly voluntary. There were forcible conversions also particularly in areas where Muslim rulers were apprehensive of Hindu conspiracy. Tegh Bahadur Singh became a legendary figure by opposing forcible conversions at

the cost of life. Conversions affected little change in the social environment or economic standard of the converts to Islam. The Rajput converts retained their caste nomenclature and family surnames. Hindus consider forcible conversion the most outrageous tyranny and Sikhs valiantly faced this outrage.

The village with its caste 'panchayats' and head man or 'Pradhan' was an autonomous unit which carried out its routine activities unmindful of what happened to the central government. The Muslim ruling class had a preference for city life. The Turks, Arabs and Persians formed the Muslim ruling class. In matters of appointment, high lineage was given a premium.

By and large, people were contended. Religious identity of subjects was not of much significance. However, it is true that Islam, during Muslim rule provided a major challenge to Hinduism. Repeated defeats on the battlefield, loss of political power and the domination of a foreign religion did engender frustration among the Hindu population. The Hindus of upper social strata turned their attention to inner life. Eventually, the characteristic of the spiritualism with tolerance for other religious faith asserted itself and new mode of life in harmony with the Muslims was tried.

The age of *bhakti* (devotion) was ushered in. It gave birth to many saints who devoted their lives in search of God and preached equalitarian approach to all religions. A pleasing feature of the social and cultural life in early medieval period was the attempt to bring the Hindus and Muslims together and to evolve a common way of living. Complete fusion was not possible and not attempted as well. The Turkish Muslims could not forget that they were conquerors and were rulers and masters. This feeling was shared by other Muslims holding high rank.

The rigours of Islamic law (Shariat) were also responsible for keeping Muslims apart from Hindus. Equally responsible

was the 'Varnasram' laws of Hindus. In the eyes of an upper caste Hindu, the Muslims, particularly the *converts from Hinduism were treated as lower than the Untouchables*. The Hindus outwardly exhibited loyalty to the Sultans and Badshahs but at heart felt humiliation of being conquered.

Both Hindus and Muslims enjoyed and participated in the festivals of each other. Many Hindus used to attend the celebrations of Muslim festivals and Muslims as well did the same i.e., attend the celebration of Hindu religious festivals. Muslim 'Sufi's and Hindu 'Yogi's also helped to bring the two communities together. The Muslims of foreign origin even learnt to live as Indians. *Unlike the British they settled permanently and regarded India as their own home*, adopting much in their dress, food, manners and customs, superstitions and even social divisions. *They used Indian languages and created a new language-Urdu, with Persian vocabulary, Hindi grammar and Arabic script.* Urdu became very popular in Northern India, particularly Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. The most popular *'Qawwali'* songs are in Urdu. Classical music has an abundant content of Urdu. *'Gajal'* is wholesale Urdu.

The socio-religious reformers like Ramanand, Kabir and Nanak taught equality of men and brotherhood of Hindus and Muslims. In Ajmer, there are still many *Hindu disciples of Mainuddin Chisti.* In this background when Babar came to India and established his rule, *he found nothing exclusively Hindu or Muslim. Everything was in a 'Hindusthani' way.*

Babar the founder of the rule of Moghul dynasty in fact, is famous for his non-communal approach as is evident from his autobiography- 'Babar-nama'. He instructed his son, Humayun to be non-partisan in regard to his subjects, no discrimination should be made on the basis of religion.

Among the Moghul rulers Akbar was undoubtedly the best. He abolished the 'Jizia' and 'Methot', gave 'Mansabdari' i.e., landlord status to the Hindus, introduced secular

education, had Mahabharat, Ramayana and Gita translated into Persian. Of the Muslim rulers who attempted Hindu Muslim harmony, Akbar did most. Hussain Shah in Bengal, Jainal Abedin in Kashmir and Bahmani in the South Inida also won the heart of the Hindu subjects. Akbar had Hindu wives who were permitted to observe all Hindu rites and customs. Other Muslim rulers who had Hindu wives are Alauddin Khalji, his son, Jahangir and Shahjahan. Feroze Shah had a Hindu mother, so had Ghyasuddin Tughlak. The Muslim ruler of Gulbarga married a Hindu princes of Vijaynagar. This is how Muslim rulers Indianised themselves.

As an unorthodox liberal Muslim, Akbar administered his kingdom without any restraint enjoined by Islamic Shariat. He succeeded in bringing about political stability in the country. The three pillars of his administration were three Hindu rajas: Man Singh, Todarmal and Birbal.

During the Moghul rule, state services ceased to be the monopoly of the Muslims. Important changes occurred in the complexion of the Muslim community. India of the Moghuls was indeed a heaven for Persian poets, and physicians. Persian mode of life became the measurement of refinements for the upper strata of the people.

The state machinery under Muslim rule in India was negatively secular. The state subordinated religion to politics. The Ulemas though highly paid, had little power with them. Most of them carried out Sultan's biddings and interpreted Islamic laws to suit their convenience. Government administration was not dictated by the Islamic Shariat. In one word, there was no Islamic Rastra as in Pakistan now.

In India, Islam got a foothold only in those areas where the population was predominantly Buddhists. Kashmir, North West Forntier, Punjab, Sindh and Bengal had the largest number of Muslim population. In Bengal, the Muslims were almost all converts from Buddhism.

In those days, to the common Hindu masses, the Muslims were looked upon as another caste like Brahmin or Kshatriya. While the emperor in Delhi was Muslim, there were many small and big states under the rule of Hindu rajas. Even when the Hindu ruler had to pay tribute and accept dependence to the Sultan or Badshah in Delhi or Agra, there was no interference in the internal affairs of the Hindu states. Areas under direct rule of the Muslim emperor were of limited dimension. Real centralisation took place only during the reign of Akbar. Under him, Hindus rajas like Mansingh could become governor of the states conquered by him. Top posts in the revenue department were held by the Hindus. Monopoly of Sanskrit scholars, however, ceased to continue as a result of Persian (Pharsee) becoming the state language. The Kayasthas learnt Pharsee and occupied high posts in the administration. One of them became the governor of Bihar. Through benevolence of Muslim rulers many Hindus had the fortune of securing the office of Zamindars (landowners) and Talukdars. There are many families in Bengali Hindu community with surnames that are Persian, such as Sarkar, Majumdar, Halder, Chakladar, Khasnobis, Mohalanobis, Sehanobis, etc. From the reign of Akbar to that of Shahjehan, thousands of Hindus voluntarily accepted Islam and entered its egalitarian fold.

One did not have to accept Islam to secure a job; only knowledge of Persian entitled a subject to get an official job. The Rajputs, the most martial among the Hindus were, in general, loyal to the Muslim rulers, and Bengali Hindus, barring a few, also did not want the fall of Siraj at the hands of the British colonisers.

Regarding the reign of Muslim rulers, Swami Vivekanand said: "Even to Mohammedan rule, we owe that great blessing -the *destruction of exclusive privilege*. That rule was, after all, not all bad, nothing is all bad, nothing is all good. *The*

Mohammedan conquest came as a salvation to the downtrodden, to the poor. That is why one fifth of our people became Mohammedans. It was not the sword that did it all; it would be height of madness to think that it was all the work of sword or fire." Even Dr. Rajendra Prasad wrote (India Divided): *"It is doubtful, if any of these invasions (Muslim), extending over 8 or 9 hundred years, was a purely religious invasion undertaken by the religious fanatics or enthusiasts for spreading Islam.* Like all conquests, they were actuated by the temporal and material motives rather than by religious zeal." Except the Hindu bigot, nobody doubts that the motivation of Muslim conquest was other than territory and wealth. Destruction of temples and idols repeatedly is also motivated by plundering wealth. No ruler likes to offend the psyche of the subjects without material interest.

Islam came to India as a religion several centuries before it came as a political force. The effect of Afghan conquest on India and Hinduism was two-fold. There was an exodus of people to the South; those who remained in their ancestral abode became more rigid and exclusive and retired into their shells and tried to protect themselves from foreign ways and influences. On the other hand, there was a gradual, hardly conscious approach towards the foreign ways both in thought and life. *A synthesis worked itself out* and this was especially marked in music.

The Aryan culture drifted to the South, which became stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy. During the 15th century a small Muslim state grew in Jaunpur in U.P. and that was a centre of art and culture and *toleration in religion. India began to absorb the foreign element.* Fierce monotheism of Islam infulenced Hinduism and the vague polytheistic attitude of the Hindus had its effect on the Muslims. Most of these Muslims were converts; only a small number of Muslims had come from outside. Muslim mysticism and Sufism grew.

The popular language of Hindi was encouraged even though Persian was the court language. Amir Khusrau, a Turk (his family settled in India) wrote on many subjects, enumerating the various things in which India excelled. Among those were religion, philosophy, logic, language and Sanskrit grammar, music, mathematics, science and the mango fruit. His fame rests, above all, on his popular songs *in the ordinary spoken dialect of Hindi.*

Partly because of the fact that the great majority of Muslims in India were converts from Hinduism and partly because of long contact Hindus and Muslims in India developed numerous common traits, habits, ways of living and artistic tastes in music, painting, architecture, food, clothes and common traditions. *During the Mughal period large number of Hindus wrote books in Persian. At the same time Muslim scholars translated Sanskrit books into Persian and wrote in Hindi.* It was during the reign of Akbar that the cultural amalgamation of Hindu and Muslim in Northern India took long step forward. Akbar himself was as popular with Hindu as with Muslim subjects. The Mughal dynasty became firmly established as India's own. *The Muslim ruler as well as the Muslim subjects were completely Indianised.* It is wrong to accuse them that they are not genuine Indian citizens.

The Muslim foreigners did not bring any new political and economic structure. Inspite of religious belief in the equality and fraternity of Islam, *Muslims were class-bound and feudal in outlook.* Religion has little effect on the economic base of exploitation. Foreign conquests bring war and destruction, revolts and their ruthless suppression, and the new ruling classes rely chiefly on armed force. Muslim conquest was no exception.

They could often ignore the constitutional restraints which had been the customary law of our country. The Afghan and Mughal rulers took special care not to interfere with old

customs and conventions and no fundamental changes were introduced. *The economic and social structure of Indian life continued as before.* In fact, Giasuddin Tughlak issued definite instructions to his officials to preserve customary law and *to keep the affairs of the state apart from religion.* Obviously the Sultan, unlike the Govt. of India, was truly secular. The village self-governing community of India continued unimpeded. Its breakup began only under British rule.

While the Indian social tendency had been to subordinate the individual to the claims of the group and socity, religious thought and spiritual seeking have always emphasized the individual. Though the group system was dominant in the organisation of Indian village society there has always been a tendency to individualism.

The organisation of our society in rural areas being, generally speaking, non-competitive and non-acquisitive, the caste divisions did not make as much difference as they might otherwise have done. The vast majority of Indian population consisted of the agriculturists. *There was no landlord system nor was then any peasant proprietorship.* The cultivator had the right to till his land and the only real question was as to the distribution of the produce of the land. *The major share is of the cultivator, the Sultan or the state took a share (usually one- sixth) and every functional group in the village which served the people in any way, had its share.*

During the reign of Aurangzeb the relation between the Hindus and the Muslims turned sour for his policies antagonised all: Marathas, Rajputs, Sikhs, Hindus and even secular Muslim intelligentsia. The society became tension ridden. After him, the Mughal empire went into decline. However, the situation was to an extent retrieved by the Sufis who set about establishing their monasteries all over the country and revived the tradition of earlier Sufi saints to spread the message of love. Their following increased both

among the Muslims and Hindus. Just as the hatred engendered by the earlier Pathan Sultans was nullified by Mughal Akbar, the hatred aroused by Aurangzeb was extinguished by the Sufis. It was then that there came into existence an atmosphere truly conducive to an understanding between Hindus and Muslims.

This was evident during the Mutiny in 1857 when Hindus and Muslims, Peshwas and Moulvis, Rani of Jhansi and Begam Hazrat Mahal fought shoulder to shoulder to regain national independence. *After the Revolt was put down, the British imperialists were particularly harsh on the Muslims because they had come to the conclusion that the revolt was led by the Muslims and that they were primarily responsible for it.* The Hindu intelligentsia, on the other hand sang praises more about the Hindu leaders like Nana Saheb, Tantia Tope and Rani of Jhansi. Even the popular communist poet Sukanta Bhattacharyya did the same. However, he emphasised that not only the princes, nawabs and the rich gave blood but the poor peasantry also took active part.

It is estimated that during the 1857 Mutiny and immediatly after, in Delhi alone, 27,000 Muslims were executed by the British. For years, Muslims were suspects in the eyes of the British rulers. With the rise of nationalist movement led mainly by the Hindus, British attitude towards the Muslims changed. Since 1890, it became more noticeable. The Muslims were favoured then. The seed of the poisonous tree of religious communalism at the political level, was sown by the British colonialists while implementing their 'Divide and Rule' policy in the administration. As early as 1842, Lord Allenborah said: "Hindus must be pitted against Mussalmans".

During the 19th century, under British rule, the relation between the Hindu and Muslim middle class is revealed by the fact that *even though the Hindu college, that was started in 1817, changed its name to Presidency college in 1854, its*

door was opened to the Muslim students only in 1873 on 27th February! Not only that; the Hindu students of the first year class refused to sit with the Muslim students on the same bench! In the Mohsin College at Chinsurah also, Hindu and Muslim students of the same class were in separate sections!

For the British, the threat of a united Hindu Muslim movement was a serious problem. In addition to stringent repressive measures to control the tide of national movement for freedom they decided to do all they could do to keep the Hindus and Muslims disunited, quarrelling and competing among themselves. They began to encourage communal and separatist tendencies. They became the champions for the Muslim interests and did everything to win over the Muslims to their side. The partition of Bengal in 1905 was attempted with this motive. The nationalist movement known as 'Swadeshi' movement to annul the partition was successful but the British motive was fulfilled. The Hindu leaders unwittingly emphasised the Hindu heritage exclusively to inspire the youth actively involved in the anti-Bengal partition movement. Apart from some outstanding nationalist Muslim leaders of Bengal, the Muslims in general were against this movement because *the partition of Bengal on communal lines was intended to favour the Muslims of Bengal.* Among the Hindu nationalist leaders there was the unconcealed clamour for 'Hindu raj.' In response to the Swadeshi movement, the Muslim intelligentsia under the leadership of Agha Khan formed the All India Muslim League with British encouragement and in order to keep away the new generation of Muslims from the Congress. It remained an upper class organisation controlled by feudal elements. The British conspiracy of creating a lasting enmity between Hindus and Muslims was successful through the formation of this communal Muslim organisation. In the beginning, Muslim League had no mass support.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the supreme nationalist Muslim leader wrote: "In those days the revolutionary groups were recruited exclusively from Hindu middle classes. In fact *all the revolutionary groups were then actively anti-Muslim.* They saw that the British Government was using the Muslims against India's political struggle and the Muslims were playing the Government's game. East Bengal had become a separate province and Bamfield Fuller, who was then Lieutenant-Governor, openly said that the *Government looked upon the Muslim community as its favourite wife.* The revolutionaries felt that the Muslims were an obstacle to the attainment of Indian freedom and must, like other obstacles, be removed. One other factor was responsible for the revolutionaries' dislike of Muslims. The Government felt that the political awakening among the Hindus of Bengal was so great that no Hindu officer could be fully trusted in dealing with these revolutionary activities. They therefore imported a number of Muslim officers from the United Provinces for the manning of the Intelligence Branch of the Police. The result was that the Hindus of Bengal began to feel that Muslims as such were against political freedom and against the Hindu community. When Shyam Sunder Chakravarty introduced me to other revolutionaries and my new friends found that I was willing to join them, they were greatly surprised. At first they did not fully trust me and tried to keep me outside their inner councils. I began to argue with them that they were wrong in thinking that Muslims as a community were their enemies. I told them that they should not generalise from their experience of a few Muslim officers in Bengal. In Egypt, Iran and Trukey the Muslims were engaged in revolutionary activities for the achievement of democracy and freedom. The Muslims of India would also join in the political struggle if we worked among them and tried to win them as our friends. I also pointed out that active hostility, or even the indifference of Muslims, would

make the struggle for political liberty much more difficult. We must therefore make every effort to win the support and friendship of the community." (*India Wins Freedom*, pp4-5)

Bengal was partitioned on the 16th October, 1905 and many Hindus and Muslims observered it as a day of mourning. The *hartal* (strike) was observed in the towns as well as some villages in Bengal. Abstinence from cooked food was practised in many homes. Thousands of people participated barefoot in mourning processions, with Rabindranath's song on their lips. The tide of Swadeshi movement spread from Calcutta to the district headquarters-Barisal, Mymansingh and Medinipur. The tides of Boycott and Swadeshi flowed through Bengal, Maharashtra and the Punjab. In many towns, people held festivals to burn British cloth. Surendranath Banerji thundered that they would smash British arrogance. Yet the leadership of the movement began to pass into extremist hands into those of Bipin Chandra Pal, Aurobindo Ghosh, and outside Bengal, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Lala Lajpat Rai and others. The students became the life and soul of this movement.

The first militant students' organisation, the "Anticircular Society" initiated in protest against a Government circular to prevent Swadeshi propaganda in schools, joyfully took up the work of organising boycott of sale of foreign textiles. *A notable section of Muslim citizens also took part in Swadeshi movement.* Moulvi Liakat Hussain accompanied students' procession. Despite all the glory in the Swadeshi movement, it was not free from limitations. The greatest weakness was *partiality in their ideology to the high caste and the Hindu religion. This proved to be an obstacle to the formation of stable and firm Hindu-Muslim unity.* Due to unevenness in social, educational and economic development, the affluent and middle class elements of our society were inducted into framework of Westernized education rather later, and received less opportunities for Government employment and social

advancement. As a result, communal grievances piled up. Taking full advantage of this, British colonisers incited communally divisive forces.

The first session of the Congress comprised only 75 members. They were mainly lawyers, journalist and school masters. The second session contained nearly 450 members chosen by public meetings and bodies. *The only group which held back was the Muslims under the influence of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan. According to him, democratic government in India would be a Hindu Government.*

Rallying the 'Moderates' of the Indian National Congress and inciting the religious-communalists, the British Government launched an assault on the Indian national movement for freedom by passing the 1909 Government of India Act, known as the Morley-Minto Reforms. They conferred the *right of vote to less then 1% of the population;* the elected representatives were given no majority in the Central or Provincial legislative assemblies; and *what was most sinister, a communal system of electoral representation was inserted.* The extremist leader, Bipin Chandra Pal declared that India would not "sell its soul for Morley's mess of pottage." The Muslim League welcomed this Act and under the leadership of Agha Khan demanded *separate electorate for Muslims* which was described by the British historian Percival Spear as the *"official germ of Pakistan".* As a result of this Act, six special Muslim constituencies of landholders were created for the Imperial Legislative council and others in some of the provinces. *This measure was one of the deepest import.* The introduction of elected municipalities in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh had already sharpened Hindu-Muslim tension in both provinces. *By 1886, the Punjab Government of Lyall already introduced separate electorates in towns like Hosiarpur, Lahore and Multan.* The measure inevitably hardened the lines of division by encouraging and even forcing

community leaders to cultivate their own religious followings alone.

The Congress and the Muslim League signed an accord among themselves at Lucknow in 1916. The Muslim league agreed to support the demand for Home Rule and the *Congress accepted separate electorate for Muslims!*

As a reward for the Muslim's allegiance to the British rule, Dacca University was established. The countrywide agitation against the partition of Bengal was led by the Hindu privileged class and the partition was annulled. This left a deep sense of anger, sorrow and frustration in the minds of a large section of urban Muslim population of Bengal. The Chancellor of the University-Lord Lytton, in his convocation address in 1922 expressed the view that *the University of Dacca was an imperial compensation to the Muslims for the annulment of the partition of Bengal.* In fact, the University of Dacca was established as a rival to the University of Calcutta. The Swadeshi movement for annulment of Bengal partition gave rise to two rival camps of Hindu and Muslim intelligentsia. This rivalry was aggravated by the opposition of Bengali Hindu intelligentsia to the Higher Secondary Education Bill introduced by Fazlul Haque, the Chief Minister of Bengal following the 1937 election.

The Khilafat movement marked the first real awakening of Indian Muslim population. In fact, few Indian Muslims have ever thought twice about the Caliph or Khalifa or his activities; but once he was dethroned by the British he became a symbol. His fall was seen as an affront to World Islam. *Since 1923, there had been progressive deterioration of Hindu Muslim relation, particularly in north India.* In cities there had been a number of communal riots. The atmosphere of distrust and anger gave rise to new causes of dispute. There was tension when Hindu and Muslim festivals clashed, particularly, when the Ram Leela clashed with Moharram. Formerly Hindus and

Muslims celebrated these two festivals in a very cordial atmosphere. A fresh cause of friction arose and that was the question of music before the mosques. The chances of friction on this question were always present because in cities there are a number of mosques and Muslims have prayers five times in a day. Objection was taken to processions and noises at the time of the sunset prayers at mosques. This is just the time when evening worship takes place in Hindu temples. This dispute assumed major proportion.

Being unhappy with the Congress attitude towards the Muslim demands Pandit Madanmohan Malviya and Lala Lajpat Rai dissociated from the Congress and formed *the nationalist Party that was wholly a Hindu party working in close cooperation with Hindu Mahasabha.* Malviya was a nationalist but not concerned with social or economic change. He was a supporter of the old orthodox order, the Indian princes and the landlords. Thus it was natural for him not to join the Swaraj Party that was too advanced politically. The situation in the country was that on one side, Hindu's resentment at being bullied by the Muslims and on the other many Hindus felt that there was too much of an attempt to extort special privileges with the threat of going over to the other side. The Hindu Mahasabha rose to some importance only due to this. *Hindu communalism opposed Muslim communalism.* The aggressive activities of Hindu Mahasabha stimulated still further Muslim communalism and in this way action and reaction continued; and in the process communal temperature went up.

Essentially it was a question between majority and minority. In Punjab and Sind, the Hindus were in a minority and the Muslims in a majority. These provincial minorities had as much fear of being crushed by a hostile majority as the Muslims had in the whole of India. The middle class job seekers in each community were afraid of being ousted by

the other community and also the holders of vested interests were afraid of radical reforms affecting those interests. The Swaraj Party suffered; some of its Muslim members joined communal organisations and some of its Hindu members drifted to the nationalist Party or Hindu Mahasabha. *Malviya had been continuously for three years the President of Hindu Mahasabha and he was nominated as the Congress President!* This very fact testified the Hindu bias in the leadership of the Congress Party.

The religious-communal leaders of both Hindu and Muslim religions were allied to the most reactionary elements in India and England and they were in reality opposed to political as well as social advance. They were meant only to bring some advancement to the small group at the top.

The Muslims were in the quagmire of a feudal anti-democratic ideology while the rising middle class among the Hindus had already begun to think in terms of the European liberals, if not progressive radicals. Both were thoroughly moderate except the Hindu nationalist revolutionaries of Bengal. Sir Syed's moderation was that of the feudal gentry to which the handful of well-to-do Muslims of upper strata belonged.

The political and economic aspect of the Hindu Muslim question was: the rising and economically better equipped Hindu middle class was resisted and to an extent checked by the Muslim landlord class. The Hindu landlords were often closely connected with the bourgeoisie and remained neutral or sympathetic to the middle class demands. The toiling masses and the lower middle classes on either side were not in the picture at all. The Hindus were, in Punjab, Sind and Bengal, the richer creditors, urban class. The Muslims in these provinces were poorer, debtor, rural class. This was the general picture.

Following the Lucknow Session of the Congress, Hindu

religious leaders, since 1936, began to openly state that majority rule meant Hindu rule, something that did not exit in the sub-continent for several centuries.

The first serious riot occurred in 1930 in Kanpur and 66 people died. In the same year, *Iqbal suggested the Union of the Frontier Province, Baluchistan, Sind and Kashmir as a Muslim state within a Federation.* Choudhury Rahamat Ali developed that conception at Cambridge and invented the term Pakistan in 1933. His ideas seemed visionary at that time but within seven years, i.e. in 1940, they have been turned into a practical programme by the Quaid-i-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the supreme leader of the Muslim league.

In 1937 election, Congress won 711 seats and overall majority in six Provinces. The Unionist Party won in Punjab. 90% of Muslim Pathans of North Western Frontier Province voted for the Congress. Muslim league won 109 of 482 seats allotted to the Muslims. It had obtained 4.8% of the total Muslim votes. Obviously, the League at that time did not have a mass support.

Jinnah, no doubt, had brought religion into politics in an opportunist fashion but he alone could not be held responsible for the debacle. He had merely taken advantage of the existing conditions. Congress could not be absolved, for it had played its part in creating the overall situation. By refusing collaboration with the Krishak-Praja Party of Fazlul Haque, the Muslim League was brought to power in Bengal. The Ministry headed by him was dethroned and Nazimuddin of Muslim League was installed as the Chief Minister of Bengal!

The Azad Hind Fauz, a militant representation of Hindu-Muslim unity was formed in Japan under the leadership of Subhash Chandra Bose titled as Netaji. The Second World War came to end with the defeat of Axis Powers and victory of Allied Powers that included Soviet Union. Protesting against

the INA prisoners' trial at the red Fort in Calcutta, there was an unprecedentedly huge popular unrest on 21 November, 1945 and again on Rashid Ali Day in February, 1946 when both Congress and Muslim League cadres jointly participated. The students, workers and citizens, Hindus and Muslims jointly called for freeing the undertrial INA officers by general strike. Barricades were raised in the city's streets and in the industrial suburbs. Many young people were martyred-Rameshwar, Abdus Salam and many others.

A wave of unrest lapped across the armed forces. The Royal Indian Navy ratings mutinied on 18th February, 1946 in Bombay and Karachi. In the warships 'Hindustan', 'Talwar' and 'Chamak' as also in Castle Barrack, everywhere the rebels tore down the Union Jack and hoisted in its place three flags of Congress, Muslim League and Communist Party of India. The CPI, Forward Block, R.S.P., RCPI and other leftist parties as also Aruna Asaf Ali heroine of the Quit India Movement of 1942 fully supported the revolt. The working class, toiling people and the students of Bombay came out in millions in support of the uprising. *Nearly 3.5 million workers of Bombay responded to the call of general strike.* The Government declared martial law and handed over Bombay to the British military forces who used tanks and armoured cars to break the general strike. *In two days, over 500 people were killed by machine gun bullets.* After carrying out an unequal struggle for several days the rebels surrendered, in their words, not to the British authorities but to the Indian people, responding to the call of the Congress and Muslim League leaders. On 23rd February, the Central Committee of the Naval ratings issued their final appeal to the Indian people.

On the 19th February, 1946, just a day after the beginning of the mutiny, the Prime Minister of Great Britian Atlee in London publicly announced that the Cabinet Mission is soon going to India to negotiate transfer of power to India.

Thus national independence was achieved through armed struggle of Hindus and Muslims, not through Gandhi's nonviolence.

The Partition of India and the blood bath associated with it aroused hatred to the extreme among the Hindu and Muslim refugees against each other. *The theory of hostages was accepted by the Congress.* Maulana Azad writes: "Though not on public platform, in private discussion, they (Sindis) were told that if they suffered any disability or indignity in Pakistan, India would retaliate on Muslims in India". (India Wins Freedom, p-216). Thus animosity between Hindus and Muslims became legitimised as that between India and Pakistan. Since 1971, however the relation between Bengali Hindus of India and Muslims of Bangladesh has improved to an extent. Bengali Hindu elites now take pride of the fact that it is due to Muslims of Bangladesh, Bengali language has attained the status of internationl recognition as the state language of a sovereign republic.

The virus of religious communalism was not the result of perfidy of any individual leader or a particular political organisation. The problem was in the orientation of the Congress supposed to be secular nationalist organisation.

According to Pandit Nehru, the basic difficulty in solving the communal problem in India under the rule of British imperialists was "the presence and the policy of British Government. Naturally the British did not favour any real settlement which would strengthen the political movement, now grown to mass proportions against them. It was a triangle with the Government in a position *to play off one side against the other, by giving special privileges.* If the other parties had been wise enough, they could have overcome even this obstacle, but they lacked wisdom and foresight. Whenever a settlement was almost reached, the Government would take some step which upset the balance." (Discovery of India, p-

382). He also argues: "Separate electorates for Muslims were introduced and additional seats were given to them in excess of their population. But even this excess in representation in the assembly could not convert the Muslim community into a majority ... *The Congress went further and declared that if there was any disagreement between the majority and a religious minority on any issue touching the special interest of the minority, it should not be decided by majority votes but should be referred to an impartial judicial tribunal, or even an international tribunal, whose decision should be final* (Ibid, p-383). But Babari Masjid dispute was not referred to international tribunal!

Maulana Azad writes: "Mr. Das was able to overcome the apprehensions of the Muslims of Bengal and was acclaimed as their leader. The way he solved the communal problem of Bengal is memorable and should serve as an example even today. In Bengal, Muslims were the majority community but for various reasons they were educationally and politically backward. Even though they numbered over 50% of the population, they held hardly 30% of the posts under the Government. Mr. C.R. Das was a great realist and immediately saw that *the problem was an economic one.* He realised that till the Musalmans were given the necessary assurances for their economic future, they could not be expected to join the Congress wholeheartedly. He therefore made a declaration which impressed not only Bengal, but the whole of India. He announced that when the Congress secured the reins of powers in Bengal, *it would reserve 60% of all new appointments for the Musalmans till such time as they achieved proper representation according to population.* He went even further in respect of the Calcutta Corporation and offered to reserve 80% of new appointments on similar terms. *He pointed out that so long as the Musalmans were not properly represented in public life and in the services, there*

could be no true democracy in Bengal. Once the inequalities have been rectified Musalmans would be able to compete on equal terms with other communities and there would be no need for any special reservation. (India Wins Freedom pp. 20-21).

Following the transfer of political power with partition Gandhi's assassination recoiled on RSS and Hindu Mahasabha. Pandit Nehru characterised Godse as 'mad man' which he was not. Regarding Hindu communalism he only said, "..there has been enough of poison spread in this country during the past years and months and this poison has had an effect on people's minds. We must face this poison, we must root out this poison and we must face all perils that encompass us and face them not madly or badly but rather in the very way that our beloved teacher taught us to face them". Is it by going on fast? Except imposing a ban on the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha, *Pandit Nehru did practically nothing to curb Hindu communalism*. How could he do with the majority of top leaders of the Congress being favourably inclined to the Hindu communalists? *Nehru himself repeatedly mentioned about the threat of Hindu back-lash*. However, it is true that he became furious to learn that Hindu communalists forcibly planted the idol of Rama inside the Babari Masjid on the night of December 22, 1949. He wanted the removal of the idol; but Pandit Govinda Ballav Pant and Lal Bahadur Shastri the Chief Minister and the Home Minister of Uttar Pradesh remained passive and *manipulated retaining the Hindu idol inside the Muslim shrine* thereby dispossessing the Indian Muslims to their fundamental right over their place of worship. With Chakraborty Raja Gopalachari as the Governor-General, Pandit Nehru, the Prime Minister and Sardar Patel, the Home Minister, such an outrage on the religious sentiments of Muslims could be perpetrated!

When the formation of Pakistan was agreed upon by the

Congress the two way exodus of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs to and fro from India and would be Pakistan began by late June, 1947. The total number of migrants or refugees was nearly 11 million of which about 10 million crossed the border between India and West Pakistan. Hindu and Sikh refugees coming to India, for obvious reason did entertain intense hostility towards the Muslims as a community. Those from West Pakistan fell under the influence of Hindu communal forces, the RSS in particular. Madan Lal who threw bomb at Gandhi was a refugee from West Pakistan. Nathuram Godse was from Maharashtra. The two became bold enough attempting assassination of Gandhi, the supreme leader of the freedom struggle; the former failed and was imprisoned but the latter succeeded.

The Government of India with Pandit Nehru as the Prime Minister and Sardar Patel as the Home Minister i.e., No. 1 and 2 could not or did not protect Gandhi despite the fact that following the unsuccessful attempt, the slogan shouted was: "*Veer Madan Lal ko chhor do*"! Maulana Azad writes: "Patel's indifference before Gandhiji's death was so marked that people had noticed it. There was naturally a wave of anger once the tragedy took place. Some people openly accused Patel of inefficiency and worse. Jai Prakash Narayan showed considerable courage in rising this issue." The ban on RSS was in effect from February 4, 1948 to July 12, 1949. The RSS eager to negotiate withdrawal of the ban, adopted a course of deceitful compromise.

Following the withdrawal of the ban, Golwalkar, the Chief of RSS went on establishing the RSS Pariwar. The strategy of the RSS would, in the public eye, confine itself to 'cultural activity' while its affiliates would branch out into the various sections spreading the message of 'Hindu Rastra'. The seemingly independent tentacles were welded together by the RSS. Golwalkar took the initiative in organising the Hindu

religious leaders in mid-1964 to discuss ways and means by which various Hindu sects and tendencies could sink their differences, work together and establish contacts with like minded Hindus residing abroad. Thus was laid the foundation of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and S.S.Apte, an RSS 'pracharak' became the first general secretary. The other organisational measure taken by Golwalkar was to utilise the organisational structure of the 'Family' to create a political front under the control of RSS and that was the Bharatiya Jana Sangh (BJS) led by Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherji. Today's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the incarnate of BJS. He sent Din Dayal Upadhyaya, Atal Behari Bajpai, Lal Krishna Advani and Sunder Singh Bhandari to help Dr. Mukherji to start BJS. Thus the RSS has been the guide in evolving the ideological as well as organisational foundation for the present Saffron Brigade. Golwalkar's book titled "We or our nationhood defined" is an elaboration of the thesis that 'we' means the Hindus and hence 'Swaraj' means Hindu Rastra. His inspiration from fascism is revealed when Golwalkar writes: "The ancient race spirit which promoted the German tribes to over-run the whole of Europe, had re-risen in modern Germany with the result that the nation perforce follows aspirations, predetermined by the tradition left by its depredatory ancestors. Even so with us: our race spirit has once again roused itself as is evidenced by the race of spiritual giants we have produced and who today stalk the work in serene majority." Further, "To keep the purity of the Race and its culture, Germany shocked the world by purging the country of the Semitic Jews. Race pride at its highest has been manifested here. Germany had also shown how wellnigh impossible it is for Races and Cultures, having differences going to the root, to be associated into one united whole, *a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by.*" Obviously Guruji's guru is Hitler. His book was published in

1939 and it continued to be the Bible for the RSS.

Panicked by the assassination of Gandhi at the hands of Hindu communalists, the Government of India took to appeasement of the Hindus. The U.P. Government, in 1949, proclaimed that *Hindi is the provincial language and Sanskritised Hindi is the regional language;* Urdu has no place in the province. Purushottamdas Tandon the speaker in U.P. assembly ordered that all bills to be moved in the Assembly should be in Hindi and in Hindi alone. *If any body sends his question in Urdu, they were thrown away.* Registration of documents concerning immovable property also had to be in Hindi. Documents brought in Urdu were refused. According to Maulana Hasrat Mohani who was the Chairman of the Reception committee for the famous conference of communists in 1925, it was nothing *but a linguistic genocide of Urdu in large parts of Hindi belt. This dispute between Hindi and Urdu embittered Hindu Muslim relation further.*

It is all in the same year 1949, Muslims were dispossessed of Babari Masjid at Ayodhya and deprived of the right to express views in Urdu language in U.P. Assembly. The event of 22-23 December, 1949 did not cause much agitation on communal lines because the RSS did not have at that time any political wing like BJP at its command. Bharatiya Jana Singh (BJS) was formed two years later i.e. in 1951.

Following the assassination of Indira Gandhi at the hands of her two Sikh bodyguards there had been mass killing of Sikhs all over India, particularly in Delhi by the Hindus. Behind the killing of Sikhs, patronage of Congress leaders and active participation of the Hindu masses including members of Congress party is known to all. Within three months of the communal frenzy leading to the carnage was declared the election for the Parliament. It was presumed by many that the Congress guilty of such heinous crime against Sikhs would not get many seats but more than 400 seats were

won by them! *And that was the first time we heard the word-Hindu backlash.* Hindus seem to have been united on the plank of opposition against the murder of Indira Gandhi and voted for the Congress party.

The clever and crafty leaders of BJP did understand the significance of the result of 1984 election. It is not merely emotional anger against the Sikh community because killings in Delhi were not spontaneous. A communal agitation was organised by the Congress and it was done in the name of religion. Since 1986 when cracks began to develop in the Congress due to corruption charges against Rajiv Gandhi and V.P. Singh resigned from the Congress party and government, Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, reportedly at the suggestion of Arun Nehru, arranged the opening of the lock at the gate of Babari-Masjid complex in February, 1986. This was done with a view to ensure Hindu votes in favour of the Congress party. The BJP and other Hindu communal organisations took advantage of the incident. Sadhus, Mahants even Shankaracharyas aided by the new organisations like Ram Janmabhumi Nyas, Ram Janmabhumi Mukti Morcha along with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal became enthusiastically active in creating excitement on communal lines among Hindu illiterate masses. Soon, the leadership of the communal agitation was grabbed by the VHP. In 1987, the BJP charted out the plan for the next general election and began the communal propaganda on a big scale under the joint auspicies of VHP, RSS and Bajrang Dal. The principal theme of the propanganda was that *Hindutva is in danger*. Thus Hindu communal forces in post-Partition India followed the Muslim League as the Guru. Jinnah propagated the hoax that Islam was in danger and Advani propagates Hinduism or Hindutva is in danger.

The RSS Parivar started spreading distorted history of the medieval period during the reign of Muslim rulers. The

media of Hindi newspapers throughout the entire north India played an important role in the spread of poisonous and pernicious falsehood. Hindutva frenzy engulfed the Hindu community. This gave rise to a commotion in the Muslim community, particularly among the fundamentalist sections. They also responded by spreading communal venom. As a reaction, the Hindus became all the more united against the Muslims. That was the first act in the drama-their game plan.

In November, 1989, the Lok Sabha election was announced. *9th November, 1989 was the 'Black Day'* in modern India when the Government of India under the leadership of Rajiv Gandhi made an abject surrender to the Saffron Brigade. It, professedly secular, fell to its knees: 'Silanyas' for Ram Mandir was enacted at the disputed site inside the Babari Masjid complex. V.P. Singh turned tail from Faizabad and Kamalapati Tripathi came back unnoticed. *The Swastika (not of Hitler) won the first round of its fight for Hindu Rastra.*

In the election immediately following this disastrous tragedy, the choice was between the dynasty and religious obscurantism; the electorate opted for the latter. As a result, the friends of the fundamentalist Hindu communal forces attained respectability. A political environment was created in which the concept of Hindutva gained legitimacy even among the people, who would not have supported it *five years ago. The concern with national integrity and security began to be identified with Hindutva!* The government at the mercy of Hindu communal forces had been all the time harping on national unity without condemning majority communalism.

In the 1989 election, through alliance with Janata Dal the BJP increased their number of M.P. s from 2 in 1984 to 88 in 1989. The 10th Lok Sabha election was held in May, 1991. *Before that communal riots were engineered by the BJP all over India with a view to polarise Hindu and Muslim*

camps on communal lines. Within seven months before the election in U.P. there were riots in 41 out of 65 districts and *from these riot affected districts BJP secured 50 seats*! The percentage of votes polled in favour of BJP was 32.5. In 1989, the BJP won only 8 seats in U.P. and vote percentage was only 7.6! In Karnataka, BJP did not win a single seat and percentage of votes in 1989 was only 4. Within 10 months before the 1991 election, there were riots in 15 districts and BJP won 5 seats with 25% of votes in 1991. In Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and Orissa, in riot affected areas BJP increased both seats and percentage of votes polled in their favour. In Tamilnadu, Kerala, and Bihar where there were no riots, BJP was unsuccessful. Evidently communal riots helped BJP to win seats in Parliment and popularity as indicated by the number of seats as well as the percentage of votes polled in their favour.

Gandhi and Khilafat Movement

Gandhi's motive behind supporting khilafat movement is revealed by his own confession!

"I hold my religion dearer than my country and therefore I am a Hindu first and nationalist after."

(Collected Works of Gandhi XXII, 462)

"If however, we do not wish to fight it out with the Muslims, if we wish to live with them as with our own brothers, *if we would ensure protection of cows, of our temples, of our women by winning over their hearts and through a friendly approval, we should welcome the opportunity we have today.* The like of it will not come again for a hundred years." (Ibid, XVIII, 203).

"I made the khilafat cause my own because I see that *through its preservation full protection can be secured for the cow".* (Ibid, XXI, 249).

"With us both, the khilafat is the central fact, with

Maulana Mohammad Ali because it is his religion, with me because in laying down my life for the khilafat, *I ensure the safety of the cow, that is my religion, from the Mussalman knife.* (Ibid, XXI 318)

Gandhi's all out support for the Islamic religious issue of khilafat, instead of reducing the prevailing communal tension between Hindus and Muslims gave rise to the exultation of religious fanaticism and belligerency of the Muslims. To Jinnah, Gandhi was "cunning fox .... a Hindu revivalist." (Gandhi-A Memoir; P. 238). Gandhi's grandson Rajmohan Gandhi records (The good boatman) that Viceroy Wavell thought Gandhi wanted to establish Hindu raj. Tolstoy whom Gandhi regarded his 'Guru' also felt that Gandhi's 'Hindu nationalism spoilt everything.'

The Babari Masjid-Ram Janmabhumi Dispute

Origin of the Problem:

According to Mirza Jan, author of Hadigah-al-Shuhada, the Hindus had the tacit support of the British who were using them to intensify hatred between Hindus and Muslims. The Hindu 'bairagi's thus on seeing the British forces attacked the Muslims in Babari Masjid but the Muslims held their ground and reached Hanuman Garhi door fighting the Hindus and a large number of Bairagis were killed. Then a large number of Bairagis attacked the Babari mosque and killed a large number of Muslims who were resisting the attack. After this massacre of Muslims the Bairagis entered the mosque and performed 'havan', blew conch shell and offered Mohan-bhog. They felt that Lord Hanuman had cleared Ayodhya of the `Mleccha's, the unholy Muslims. They also dug the Muslim graves and put an idol there. Thus it appears to be the first systematic confrontation between Hindus and Muslims in Ayodhya.

The British succeeded in driving a wedge between Hindus and Muslims. *This happened in 1855 but did not end there*. The Muslims again rose under the leadership of Amir Ali Amethwi to recover the mosque. The Nawab of Oudh-Wajid Ali-Shah was unwilling to help the Muslims as he knew that the political fall out in that case would go against him. The British were already looking for excuse to unseat him. He kept out of the controversy. Nevertheless, the Muslims could succeed in getting possession of the mosque, throwing out the Bairagis who had occupied it. Then they began to file suit in courts of law. In 1858, the Muslims complained of the construction of a `chabutra' near the pulpit of the mosque and performing puja there. In 1860, the Babari Masjid was properly registered.

The 'Organiser', the mouth-piece of RSS claimed (March 29, 1989): "On the historic morning of 23rd December, 1949, the idols of Shri Ramchandra and Sita Devi miraculously appared in the Janmasthan. As the Hindu devotees rejoiced over the miracle and thronged in thousands ..."The truth was altogether different. A group of 50-60 persons entered Babari Masjid at night of 22nd December and installed the idols. This is how the 'miracle' occurred.

The 'miracle' followed a 9-day non-stop recitation of 'Ramcharit Manas' just outside the mosque and it was organised by Akhil Bharatiya Ramayana Mahasabha (founded by Paramhansa Ramchandra Das in 1946). Akshay Brahmachari, the Secretary of Faizabad district Congress committee had the moral courage to speak against the outrage perpetrated by the Hindu vandals. He wrote to Lal Bahadur Shastri and went on hunger strike twice in 1950. Shastriji only said: "The final decision can be taken only after a judgement from the court"!

Both the Chief Secretary (Bhagwan Sahay) and the I.G. (P.V.N. Lahiri) frantically sent directives to remove the idol from the interior of Babari Masjid. It was the *district magistrate, K.K. Nayar who stalled the directive* pleading "suffering which will entail too many innocent lives". Akshay Brahmachari forewarned: "If we do not resist these reactionary ideas with all the forces at our command the ideals of the Congress will become extinct and reactionary forces will sweep the country."

On 29 December 1949, a magistrate made an order not restoring possession of the mosque to the Muslims, but appointing a receiver to prevent 'breach of peace' and also ordered attachement of the said buildings.

From 1950-1984, the dispute over Babari Masjid remained unsolved but free of agitation from either Muslim or Hindu community. The Ram Janma Bhumi Action

Committee came into being on October 7, 1984 and it launched the 'tala kholo' (opening of lock) agitation. The agitation was temporarily suspended on account of Indira Gandhi's assassination but it was revived with renewed vigour since October 23, 1985 under the leadership of VHP. The controversy assumed fearful dimension soon after the decision of District Court in February, 1986 to unlock the doors of the Babari Masjid. The reporter of 'Statesman'- Neerja Choudhury wrote on the disclosure by a senior VHP leader that Rajiv Gandhi had indicated in no uncertain terms that the gates of the edifice "must open to the devotees before Shivaratri on 8th March, 1986!"

The Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court passed an order on August 14, 1989 accepting the application by the U.P. Govt's standing Counsel R.N. Trivedi to "restrain all parties and groups and persons represented by them from interfering in any way in any manner with the site in despute, to disturb the status quo and further to organise or to extend threats of interference by organising any activity which may bring about confrontation between two communities which is bound to threaten public peace and public order." Following Home Minister Buta Singh's green signal on September 27, 1989, the Shila puja began three days later. According to the agreement, the Government would allow Ram Shila puja function to go on all over India.

Demolition of the Babari Masjid

It was the end result of a carefully planned conspiracy. Atal Behari Bajpai denied it but indirectly admited it. The Central Bureau of Investigation has unearthed secret meetings, letter and other evidences of the conspiracy. The chargesheet is against 40 leaders and activists of the BJP, VHP, Bajrang Dal and Shiv Sena; not against the RSS! The accused have been charged with criminal trespass, intentional destruction and defiling the Muslim shrine.

Among the forty are L.K. Advani, Kalyan Singh, Uma Bharti, Sadhvi Rithambara, Murli Manohar Joshi, Giriraj Kishore, Ashok Singhal, Vishnu Hari Dalmia, Bal Thakeray, Moreswar Save, and Vinay Katiyar; and two bureaucrats, R.N.Srivastava (D.M.) and D.B. Roy (SSP).

According to CBI, the conspiracy was hatched as early as October, 1990. Advani met Thackeray and convinced him that the Rathajatra helped in building Hindutva wave and the momentum for construction of Ram temple was increasing. Moreswar Save (Shiv Sena M.P.) wrote to Kalyan Singh on 17 July, 1991 promising Shiv Sena's help in the temple construction. Between 22 September 1991 and 6 October 1991 the Bajrang Dal held a camp at Ahmedabad to teach volunteers the art of climbing up structures with rope. On 19th November 1992, Vinay Katiyar said that a *suicide squad of one lakh people had been formed for the Kar Seva* and will follow "the policy of demolition". On 30th November 1992 the Shiv Sena decided at a meeting in Delhi to demolish the Masjid and perform Kar Seva in the 'Sanctum Sanctorium'. Pawan Pande (Shiv Sena) purchased pickaxes, forks and shovels in collaboration with VHP's Ram Katha Kunja branch. The bills for the same have been located. *On 5th December 1992 a practice session at Laltila Ram Katha Kunj was held 500 meters away from the Masjid.* On the morning of 6th December 1992, Advani told Kar Sevaks: *"This is the last day of Kar Seva."* The demolition began following Advani's exhortation. Most importantly a CBI tape reveals that while the demolition was in progress, Kalyan Singh asked for Advani's consent for his resignation when *Advani told him not to resign till the demolition was complete*. Obviously, the principal villain of the conspiracy is Advani.

Kalyan Singh, R.N. Srivastava and D.B. Roy were fully aware that the central paramilitary force were equipped with

riot gear and rubber bullets to avoid casualties. Yet, there was no move to deploy these forces even when the demolition was in progress. *The process of demolition lasted 5 hours, but neither the State Government nor the Central Government took any action, remained a mute spectator of the event.* The Cabinet meeting was held at 6 p.m. after the completion of demolition and construction of makeshift temple. The Supreme Court Bench had a viewing on the demolition on the same date.

Historical facts about Ayodhya and Babari Masjid

A panel of renowned historians like Sarvepalli Gopal, Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra and twenty two others published a document, "Ram Janmabhoomi Babari Masjid", demolishing myths about Rama, Rama's janmasthan, Ayodhya and Muslim rulers. The following is a summary of the document:

I. Behind the controversy lie issues of faith, power and politics.

II. Historical evidence is presented here not as a polemic or as a solution to the conflict, for this conflict is not a matter of historical records alone. *The conflict emerges from the widespread communalism of Indian politics.*

III. The Ramayana by Valmiki- since this is a poem much of it could have been fictional, including characters and places; historians can not accept the personalities, the events or the location as historically authentic.

IV. There is no archaeological evidence to show that at that time, the region around Ayodhya was inhabited. The earliest possible date for settlement at the site is of about eighth century B. C. Rama was born in the Treta Yuga i.e. thousands of years before the Kali Yuga which is supposed to have begun in 3102 B.C.

V. There is a controversy about the location of Ayodhya. There are very few references to an Ayodhya, which is said to be located on the Ganges but not on the river Saryu, which is the present site of Ayodhya.

VI. While inscriptions from the 5th to the 8th centuries A.D. and even later, refer to people of Ayodhya, none of them refer to it as a place associated with the worship of Rama. (Epigraphic India, 10, p.72; 15, p. 143; 1, p.14)

VII. The cult of Rama seems to have become popular from 13th century onward, gaining ground with the gradual rise of the Ramanandi sect, and the composition of the Rama story in Hindi. Until 16th century Shaivism continued to be more important than the cult of Rama. Only from 18th century onwards do we find the Ramanandi sadhus settling on a large scale.

VIII. No historical evidence has been unearthed to support the claim that the Babari Mosque has been constructed on the land that has been earlier occupied by a temple.

IX. Tulsidas, the great devotee of Rama, a contemporary of Akbar and an inhabitant of the region, is upset at the rise of the 'mleccha' but makes no mention of the temple of Rama Janmabhoomi.

X. The patronage of Muslim Nawabs was crucial for the expansion of Ayodhya as a pilgrimage centre. The dewan of Nawab Safdarjung built and repaired several temples in Ayodhya. Safdarjung gave land to the Nirvana Akhara to build a temple on Hanuman Hill in Ayodhya.

XI. At moments of conflict between Hindus and Muslims, the Muslim rulers did not invariably support Muslims. When a dispute between the Sunni Muslims and the

Naga Sadhus broke out in 1855, over a Hanumangarhi temple in Ayodhya, Wajid Ali Shah took firm decisive action. He appointed a tripartite investigation committee consisting of the district official Agha Ali Khan, the leading Hindu landholder Raja Man Singh and the British Officers in charge of Company's forces. When the negotiated settlement failed, Wajid Ali Shah mobilised the support of Muslim leaders to bring the situation under control, confiscated the property of the leader of the Muslim communal forces, Moulavi Amir Ali and finally called upon the army.

XII. Ayodhya city can not be claimed by any one community. A political solution should be urgently found; *the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babari Masjid area be demarcated and declared a national monument.*

Hindu Resurgence

As a reaction to the virulent attack on Hindustan by the 'Young Bengal' and the conversion by the Christian Missionaries in Bengal, an aggressive Hinduism replaced the shy passive creed that, in the past used to be almost ashamed of itself and stand ever on the defensive amidst the foes of Hinduism. The first philosophical exponents of this new Hinduism were Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachuramoni and novelist Bankim Chandra Chatterji. The former called science to his aid to prove that Hindu religious practices surcharge the body with electricity drawn from the atmosphere and earth. It was pseudo-science no doubt, but his audience knew no better science. Such theory may raise smile today but in those days, the effect was extraordinary. The same effect was produced among the richer and better educated classes of Hindus by Bankim Chandra.

Swami Dayanand Saraswati (1827-1883) started Arya Samaj which aimed at taking Hinduism back to what he understood to be the pristine purity of Vedic age. His principal base was Northern India (Punjab and Western part of U.P.). His message attained success for it combined sharp criticism, of many existing Hindu practices (idolatry, polytheism, child marriage, taboos in widow remarriage, foreign travel, Brahman predominance and multiplicity of castes based on birth alone) with an extremely aggressive assertion of the superiority over all other faiths, based on Vedic infallibility. The Arya Samaj overshadowed the 'Brahmas' in the contest of loyalties of reform-minded educated youngman of Northern India. The Arya Samajis also struck deep roots among the trading castes. The principal early leaders were Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Munshi Ram (Swami Sraddhanand). They went in for large-scale "Suddhi" movement in purifying the converts from

Hinduism. The Arya Swamaj became a channel for the process of Sanskritisation. By 1921, its membership rose to a million whereas the 'Brahmas' never numbered more than a few thousands. The Arya Samaj split on two issues of meat-eating versus vegetariansim and Anglisised versus Sanskrit-based education. The moderate faction led by Hansraj and Lajpat Rai concentrating on building a chain of Dayanand Anglo-Vedic (DAV) schools and colleges and also interest in 'Swadeshi' movement first started in Bengal. *The more openly revivalist Gurukul faction founded by Lekh Ram and Munshi Ram started the Hardwar Gurukul in 1902.* They emphasised proselytation through paid preachers and 'Suddhi'. Within both groups developed trends towards a *shift from Arya Dharam to Hindu consciousness and quite often anti-Muslim Hindu communalism.* Swami Sraddhanand's bitter polemics with the Ahmedia Muslim sect led to his assassination. Lajpat Rai's associate Lala Lalchand preached that the consciousness must arise in the minds of all Hindus that he is a Hindu, not merely an Indian. He clamoured for a Hindu Sabha, Hindu press and a Hindu fund with regular office and machinery for collecting information and seeking redress by self-help. The Arya Samaj was, in fact coming close to the postures of orthodox Hindusim and had been engaged in organising through Hindu Sabhas like Hari Sabha, Sanatan Dharam Sabha and Bharat Dharam Mandal. *Revivalism thus contributed to the assertion of a Hindu identity in place of Indian identity.*

Not only Brahma or Prarthana Samaj or more secular movements of 'Young Bengal' had been entirely Hindu in composition, they all viewed that medieval dark age ended with the British rule! In colonial India, almost all the leaders of the national movement against British rule being Hindus, the source of inspiration from the past history was naturally Hindu heroes like Shivaji, Rana Pratap and Guru Govind

Singh, all of whom fought valiantly against the Muslim rulers.

Nationalist leaders, in general were primarily interested in acquiring political power for their class brethern-landlords and capitalists belonging to their own religious community. Consequently Hindu nationalist leadership began to exaggerate the glory of Hindu Kingdom and the communal Hindu historians followed suit. They project the ancient period under Hindu rule as the 'golden age' and the medieval period under Muslim rule as the 'dark age'.

It is Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya, the pioneer of nationalism in Bengali literature who claimed that purified and regenerated Hindu ideal is far superior as a rational philosophy of life than Western religious philosophy. *He was extremely anti-Muslim.* His hatred for Muslims is unconcealed in his novel 'Sitaram' in which the heroine, Sri urged the Hindus to fight the Muslims with the war cry: *"Kill, kill the enemy of the Hindus, kill my enemy, kill, kill the enemy".*

The Hindu resurgence was the result of English education, especially in Bengal. The Bengali upper class had chosen this medium of education and with it the Westernization of their life. *The Westernization of the Bengali mind was completed by the establishment of the Calcutta University in 1857.* The Hindus acquired Western personality and it was given a positive content by the work of the Orientalists who revealed to them the authentic historical character of their ancient civilization. Thus the new life of the Hindus under British rule could also be regarded, besides being Westernized also as being Hinduised in a living way by a Hindu renaissance.

But that was bound to have an anti-Muslim edge, both cultural as well as political, material and ideological, in its full unfolding. William Carey, who complied the first Bengali

dictionary, excluded words of Urdu origin in Bengali as being the result of corruption of Bengali by the Muslims! In the first quarter of 19th century Bengali purists objected to the habit of Bengalis of Calcutta to use Urdu words, instead of Sanskrit. And all Bengali writers took an inordinate pride in proclaiming themselvs as Aryas!

On the historical side, there was the dwelling on and glorification of Rajput, Maratha and Sikh resistance to Muslim rule as the most significant feature of history of India in the medieval period under Muslim rule.

How Hindu and Muslim view each other

In a society divided into classes, different classes of people with the same religious faith have quite a different outlook. A Hindu landlord and a Hindu landless agricultural labourer can not possibly entertain the same view in regard to economic and political issues but may have a similar view towards the Muslims. This is so because a Hindu child is indoctrinated against the Muslims- "Muslims are inferior to Hindus" in all respects. This is particularly so, at least among the Bengalis.

The Partition and the attitude towards Pakistan are the two principal issues on which Hindus and Muslims have different perception. Hindus in general think that Muslims are responsible for the partition of India on communal lines. This is only partly true. They, no doubt wanted freedom from Hindu domination but the fear of being dominated was generated by the utterances and activities of the Hindu nationalist leaders. It is also true that real amity between Hindus and Muslims was hardly ever achieved. The inherent antipathy of one towards the other is described by Nirad C. Choudhury: "The true definition of a Hindu in contemporary India is that he is a non-Muslim; and that of a Muslim that he is a non-Hindu. If the Hindus were assured of the satisfaction of being something inimical to the Muslim and distinct, he would not care if everything from the Vedas down to the sacred thread went to the refuge heap. On his part, the Muslim would be ready to forget all about even the 'Shariat' if he had the assurance of not being merged in the Hindu." (The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian, p.510).

To understand the Hindu mind in medieval India, invaluable are the impressions of Al-Biruni, as recorded in

his famous book 'Tari-Khul-Hind' : ... "they totally differ from us in religion as we believe in nothing in which they believe and vice versa .. all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them - against all foreigners ... in all manners and urges they differ from us to such a degree as to frighten their children with us, with our dress and our ways and customs and as to declare us to be devil's breed, and our doing as the very opposite of all that is good and proper ... the repugnance of the Hindus against foreigners increased more and more when the Muslims began to make their inroads into their country ... the Hindus believe that there is no country but theirs, no science like theirs. They are haughty, foolishly vain, self-conceited and stolid. They are by nature niggardly in communication that which they know and they take greatest possible care to withhold from men of another caste among their own people, still much more, of course, from any foreigners." He also noted that in religion, a distinction has to be made between the beliefs of Hindu educated class and those of Hindu masses. There can not be a better description of a Hindu and his outlook.

Ronald Segal (Crisis of India) writes: "Hinduism teaches only acquisition to caste duty, endurance of miseries; *it does not encourage resistance to injustice*. Among Hindus, there developed a common morality that exacted among other things, reverence towards Brahmins and respect for all animals, especially the cow- 'Gomata'." *Cow protection became a slogan of Hindutva*. Not only Hindu communal forces, even Acharya Vinoba Bhave, the number one disciple of Gandhi made it a cause to fight for. He wanted legislation banning cow slaughter! Eating of beef by the Muslims is considered to be an offence against Hinduism! A devout Hindu views beef eating to be a sin. He can not reconcile this practice of Muslims. For a Hindu, it is sinful even to think of it. However, in cities and towns, a Hindu, now a days, tolerates

Hindus who are in the habit of relishing beef. The Christians, particularly those of European breed are not condemned at all for beef-eating!

The relation between Hindus and Muslims, both belonging to the middle class can not possibly be cordial. A middle class Muslim has always the feeling of being discriminated and the discrimination is a stark reality. And it is particularly this class of Muslims like the Moulavis or bigot Muslims are the agents for spreading rumours about persecution of their co-religionists by the Hindus. The Urdu press like the Hindi press is notorious for rumour mongering. However, there are certainly some very progressive Hindi and Urdu journalists. Of course, the Hindu communalists are dominant in states like Maharashtra, U.P., Gujarat and Rajasthan where Muslims are in constant agony. Muslims of Bangladesh do not differ much from the co-religionists in Pakistan in relation to the question of retaliating the crimes perpetrated by Hindu fanatics in India.

How a Bengali Hindu 'Bhadralok' views the Muslims is best reflected in the comments of Sarat Chandra Chatterji (the most popular Bengali novelist and the President of Howrah Congress Committee) on the Hindu Muslim unity: "The Muslims had come to India, at first, only to plunder and not for founding kingdoms. But then, they did not stop merely at looting. They destroyed temples, broke sacred idols and violated modesty of women. In fact, at no time did they feel any compunction in inflicting insults on the religions of other men or causing the maximum hurt to their humanity ... *Hindustan is the homeland of Hindus; so on the Hindus alone devolves the duty of liberating it by breaking the shackles of bondage.* The Muslims' face is turned towards Turkey and Arabia. Their heart is not here in this country ... but how will this liberation be achieved? Can the patch work of any pact bring this about? I ask you. When the

Hindus will have prepared themselves for fulfilling this sacred task of winning freedom, *it will not be necessary to notice whether the handful of Muslims have joined them or not.* "(Sarat Rachanavali, Vol. 3, pp. 472-76).

Bengal, at that time had a Muslim majority. In view of such an attitude towards the Muslims of India, it is not at all suprising that Hindu fascists are getting increasing support from the urban literate population.

Education and Communal Politics

The spread of English education beyond the limits of the metropolitan city of Calcutta was a tardy process till the beginning of the fourth decade of the 19th century. The students, clerks, nephews of accountants (Khajanchis) or grandsons of 'sarkars' dealt with the disposal, auction and sale of goods. *Till 1837, Persian* (pharses) *was the language of the court.* Families of established tradition in the interior found it profitable to teach their children Persian rather than English; *an appointment in court fetching a low salary but quite adequate gratification.*

In 1844, it was expressly declared that *preference would be given in government appointments to candidates with knowledge of English.* The declaration put an end to all doubts about the utility of English education, particularly so far as interior of Bengal is concerned. *The change of court language from Persian to English in 1837 came as something of a shock to the Persian knowing community, particularly the Muslims.* Hindus were also affected. Dewan Kartick Chandra Roy wrote: "The sorrow were also at that news was akin to that feeling when one is deprived of a cherished treasure, accumulated through hard labour, or loses a son capable of earning money. The Hindu 'Bhadralok's from among whom all the subordinate officials had long been drawn, recovered from the initial shock to adopt one foreign language for another. That the Hindus showed more adaptability than Muslims in this respect is a very significant fact of social history.

By 1850, English schools had been established in different district head quarters. In the neighbourhood of Calcutta, the landlords, specially those of Taki, Janai, Burdwan and Andul, had been instrumental in opening of English schools.

While the spread of English education in rural Bengal was almost spontaneous, social opposition was altogether absent. A spirit of rivalry and competition between the three upper castes-Brahamins, Vaisyas and Kayasthas, to a considerable extent account for the educational dynamism of the Bengali gentry.

The Bengal gentry or 'Bhadralok' belonged generally to these higher caste Hindus. They could have been landlords, superior Zamindars, or petty Talukdars but never actual cultivators. Their economic condition varied from affluence to indigence. Possession of some landed property was an important feature of gentry, but not everywhere. The bearing of landed property on English education, though quite important, was not absolute. Probably English education made greater impact on professional rather than the landed class of the gentry.

The richer land owning classes, however, played a vital role in the growth of education in Bengal in so far as they diverted a large part of their charitable expenditure to the foundation of English schools. The motive that guided such benevolence was often expectation of recognition by Government leading to conferment of a title-Rai Shaheb or Rai Bahadur.

The university degree had become the accepted object of ambition, the passport of distinction in public service and in the learned professions of 1,589 students who obtained arts degree in the University of Calcutta between 1857 and 1882; in 1882, 526 had entered the public secvices, 581 the legal profession and 12 had become doctors. Most of the medical men had, however, proceeded direct to medical degree without taking arts degree. The 470 who remained were, no doubt, largely employed as teachers in the colleges and high schools. These were the modes of life most esteemed by the Bengali gentry. *Bengal was in many respects the back-*

woods of Indian Islam. The strength of the indigenous pull on Bengali Muslims following mainly from their peculiar racial and lingusitic composition tended to distinguish them from the rest of the Muslim community in India. Yet, the hold of Islamic learning, though confined within a smaller section of the community then in Bihar or the Western provience (U.P.) was far from insignificant. In some rural and semirural tracts in Hoogly, Howrah and Burdwan, Islamic learning reached a sufficiently high standard. The question of Muslim backwardness in education was applicable specially to Bengal with its vast Muslim population, concentrated mainly in the northern and eastern districts.

The Hunter Commission of 1882 considered the depressed condition of Bengali Muslims to be one of the main causes of their educational backwardness. A very large number of Muslims became impoverished by the substitution of English for Persian. Not several branches of the executive service, the old system of education was also rendered useless, spelling disaster for many. The best families supplied "moonshine" and "moulvis" not only to their co-religionists but also to the *Hindus, who since the 16th century, had taken to Persian education.* Those sources of income suddenly dried up and few trades likewise fell into disuse, for instance, extensive copying of manuscripts, paper manufacture (one very important centre was Pandva, in Hoogly), painting etc. The poverty of the better class Muslims was rendered more bitter by the consciousness of former opulence. There was no demand for the old education and poverty forces the people to turn from intellectual work to manual labour. The sentiments of the 'respectable' but impoverished Muslims found expression in a petition of the Muslim inhabitants of Sylhet to one of the judges of the sudder Dewani Adalat. Referring to their distress following the abolition of Persian

as the court language, the petitioners wrote in 1854: "Among Mussalmans...the more respectable members of the community have lived to see themselves reduced and degraded while low and mean people with a smattering of English and Bengali, acquired in those schools, have risen above them, and became men of some note... That this is extremely degrading and humiliating is a fact too well known to require any proof... nor can perhaps a better example of the humiliation be adduced than the acrimonious conduct of and the rancourous feelings entertained by Europeans of honourable birth and high ambitions towards an East Indian of low parentage, hoping to be raised above them."

The generally depressed condition of the Ashraf community combined with the smallerness of the community itself, placed as it was by the side of vast Muslim peasant population, may account, in a large measure for Muslim backwardness in respect of new education. Yet this backwardness could not have been so appalling but for certain subjective factors.

Prominent among the ideas which sway the common Muslim in the conviction that nothing will compensate him for the loss of conscious membership of the great Muslim community of the world. This is true for Ashrafs, not for rural Muslims. The upper class Muslims of Dacca had an emphatic aversion to the Bengali language.

The attachment to Islamic learning created serious language problem for the Bengali Muslims. The natural language of the great majority of Bengali Muslims was Bengali. The orthodox section looked upon the modern system of education harmful and irreligious and they put their boys under old and obsolete mode of education. So far as 19th century is concerned, *English education remained almost completely associated with the Hindu gentry of Bengal.*

In the field of education and employment in Government jobs the position of Bengali Muslims was as follows:

a) In 1937-38, in employments on the basis of examination, Hindus were 85, Muslims 55. In 1938-39, the corresponding figures were 68 and 59 respectively.
b) In teaching jobs, in 1938-39, Hindus were 19 and Muslims 12
c) In higher posts of the Secretariat, Hindus were 21 and Muslims 18
d) Among the contractors:
i) For works worth 50,000 to 1,00,000 rupees: Hindus were 62 and Muslims 15.
ii) For works worth 10,000 to 50,000 rupees: Hindus were 150 and Muslims 36
iii) For works worth 5,000 to 10,000 rupees: Hindus were 228 and Muslims 84.
iv) For works worth less than 5,000 rupees: Hindu were 415 and Muslims 169

The 1901 census Report highlights the backwardness of Muslims in employment in top Government jobs.

Post	Total Number	Muslims
High Court Judge	3	1
District and Sessions Judge	10	2
Subjudge	62	1
Munsiff	343	18
Provincial Judge	3	-
Additional Judge	7	-
Deputy Magistrate & Collector	529	76
High Court Lawyer	215	11

Muslim Education in Bengal in 1883-1884:

Institution	Total Students	No. of Muslim Students
Lower Primary School	1,097,116	348,286 (31.7%)
Higher Primary School	99,476	14,897 (14.9%)
Middle Vernacular School	62,209	8,252 (13.2%)
Middle English School	46,445	5,756 (12.3%)
High English School	53,991	5,186 (9.6%)
Art School	2,426	132 (4.6%)

It is worthwhile to remember that in 1881, Bengal meant Bengal Presidency and the percentages of Hindu and Muslim population were 65.4 and 31.2 respectively. The corresponding all-India percentages were 74 and 19.7. The total population in India was 241,860,492.

The education system as well as Bengali literature in Bengal developed under the leadership of Bengali Hindus. In consequence, Hindu heritage influenced both educational systems and Bengali literature. In those days, nationalism became synonymous with Hindu revivalism. As a result, Bengali Muslims tended to take shelter under the umbrella of pan-Islamism. This complicated the education. They found the *entire education department monopolised by the Hindus*. This was regarded as an obstacle to advancement of Muslims in education.

As early as 1872, the Bengal *Government wrote that Bengali Muslims do not want to acquire education through 'Panditi' Bengali language influenced by Sanskrit.* It was also pointed out that the causes of Muslim backwardness in education were poverty, language and their demand for religious education. The absence of any Muslim representative in the Board of Education was held to be an important cause. In 1915, the Government instituted a

Committee to enquire into the problem of education for the Muslim population. That Committee did not recommend any separate system of education for Muslims. However, there was the recommendation for adequate number of Muslim representatives in the Boards of High and Middle school and in Government schools. 15% of seats were reserved for Muslim students. The High Schools must have provision for teaching Arabic, Persian and Urdu (for studying Koran).

The Calcutta University Commission of 1917-19 also considered the problem of education for the Muslim community. The Muslim members placed the following complaints before the Commission.

1. It is difficult for Muslims to learn the Sanskritised Bengali that is patronised by the University.
2. University recommended text books are not suited to education of Muslims, because they are full of Hindu religion and Hindu heritage. The content of these books create adverse reaction in Muslim mind.
3. The custom of writing the names of the candidates on the answer papers in the University examinations is detrimental to the Muslims.
4. Among the 895 examiners appointed by the University, apart from those for Arabic and Persian, the number of Muslims was 9 only.

Obviously, the *Muslims demanded due share in the governance of education.* By that time they became conscious about the need and advantages of education. Since then began the common system of primary education under the supervision of the Government at the centre. It is significant *that in the stage of primary education, the percentage of Muslim students was 56.* Muslim resentment against Hindu domination in the field of education was getting more and more intense. Hindus were neither willing to give up their authority nor accept the Muslim viewpoint.

Azizul Haq, the Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University also complained about the influence of Sanskrit on Bengali language, abundance of Sanskrit words and the contents of text books.

On 21 August, 1940, Fazlul Haque, Chief Minister as well as minister of Education introduced 'Bengal Secondary Education Bill', 1940. He wanted to have Shyama Prasad Mukherji, Harendranath Choudhury, Pramatha Nath Banerji and Kiran Shankar Roy in the Select Committee but they all refused to join. *The introduction of this Bill caused an unprecedented communal agitation in Bengal.* In the Assembly, Muslims were majority but in the University, Hindus were majority. As a result, communal rift was unavoidable. The Muslims believed that Calcutta University was nothing but a Hindu organisation. When one Hindu MLA (educationist also) said: "The upper class Hindus organised these schools with their blood", retort came from another Muslim MLA: "At the expense of Bengal's poor peasants." Hindu member was a well known landlord. The speeches of Hindu MLA were intended to assert that they would nullify the bill at any cost. Kiran Shankar Roy claimed: "Out of the current 1400 schools, 1200 were established by the Hindus; and of 300,000 students only 80,000 were Muslims."

Abul Hashim gave an example of Hindu communalism and nationalism from a text book recommended by the Hare School. The Book was Abanindra Nath Tagore's 'Raj Kahini'. The quotation was, "by that time, Amir Omraha of the Sultan left behind their 'lungi's, darhi (beard) and along with their wives and the chicken-cages abandoned the town during the night and fled towards Ajmir. In the morning Prithviraj captured Toda."

Even Bengali scientist Acharya Prafulla Chandra Roy commented about the bill: "Apart from 50 Government

schools and slightly less then 150 Christian Missionary schools, all the secondary schools of the province are built by the Hindus and are conducted by the Hindus...Is it a matter of surprise that the system that obstructs the progress in education and even offends the basis of their culture, is not acceptable to the Hindus?" He was not ready to accord any importance to the complaints of Muslims in regard to the domination of Hindus over Calcutta University and penetration of Hindu culture in education.

What is to be done

The demolition of the Muslim shrine is comparable to the Reichstag fire. The perpetrators of the crime are not different from the hated Nazi despots. Hindutva fascism of the RSS Parivar is the Hindu version of Nazi fascism. Unless checked, the country is going to be plunged into internecine clashes between Hindu saffron brigade and the hapless Muslims. As hostages, the Hindus in Bangladesh will be subjected to the worst from of torture by the Muslim counter-parts.

In order to repair the damage done to India's secular ethos, to the reputation world over, the Government must do the following:

1. The site on which the Babari Masjid stood should first be handed over to the Muslims, the legal owners. It is Wakf land which is inalienable.
2. Babari Masjid should be reconstructed at the very site where it stood, following the proof attested by the Supreme Court or even international tribunal that there was no Hindu temple underneath the mosque which has been demolished. The Muslims have already announced to forego the claim over the shrine if it is proven that there existed a Hindu temple at the site.
3. The proof of archaeological investigation must be binding on both disputant parties.

Tasks for all secular forces ready to fight a protracted battle against the Hindutva fascist forces of RSS Parivar are:

1. Expose the true character of the Congress as well as the RSS Parivar.

Under the garb of secularism (Indian Constitution variety), the Congress, while augmenting communal violence against the Muslim minority, on the one hand, thereby

creating fear and insecurity among them, is on the other hand, creating the illusion that they are the saviours for them. At the same time, to attract the Hindu majority to its side, it shuts its eyes towards the atrocities perpetrated against the Muslims by the Hindu communal forces-the saffron brigade of the RSS. The RSS Parivar had been publicly saying that the Garbha griha of the proposed Ram temple would be the site of the Babari masjid. The Muslim leader from Faizabad (district head-quarter) forewarned the Prime Minister about the danger of demolition but the Govt did not take any action to protect the mosque. Arjun Singh claimed, even when he was in Congress Party that the Govt. had prior intimation about the conspiracy of demolition. Instead of taking any measure towards protection of the Muslim shrine, before the eyes of all, barricades were put up all along the road to Ayodhya to prevent the paramilitary forces and the vehicles to reach Ayodhya.

After allowing more than a lakh of 'Kar Sevaks' equipped with the instruments for demolition to reach the shrine, the Government feigned that they had been betrayed. *Betrayal is possible only by the friendly collaborators.* Kalyan Singh, the then Chief Minister of U.P. exposed the myth of betrayal by his assertion that he had fore-told publicly that under no circumstance he would agree to firing on the Kar Sevaks.

The police of U.P. Government posted there helped the demolition either by active participation in the crime or inaction. On the night of December 6, 1992, power, light, floodlights, water etc, were supplied to the Kar Sevaks who demolished the Masjid, to enable them construct the make-shift temple at the site of Masjid. It also saw to it that in the morning of 7th December, before the deployment of paramilitary, the ruins could be removed and Kar Sevaks and policemen perform puja in the newly built Mandir! All

these nefarious activities of the Government must be exposed particularly to the Hindus all over India.

Hindutva fascists, along with fomenting hatred against the Muslim minority encouraged Hindu chauvinism with the ultimate objective of establishing Hindu Rastra. Demolition of the Masjid was rehearsal before an all out pogrom against the entire Muslim community in India. Hindu chauvinism is propagated through the demand: *Muslims of India must have a Hindu way of life.*

The claim of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) that there had been a temple at the site of the Masjid was referred to the Supreme Court to give their opinion whether the claim is a fact. The Supreme Court Bench adopted the judgement by a majority of 3:2 (Justices Venkatachaliah, J.S.Verma and G.N. Roy) : "The special Reference No.1 of 1993 made by the President of India under Article 143(I) is suprefluous and unnecessary and does not require to be answered." The minority 42-page verdict by Justices A. M. Ahmedi and S.P. Bharucha, which also refused to answer the Reference was more direct in its attack: *"...the purpose of the reference is, therefore opposed to secularism and is unconstitutional.* Besides, the Reference does not serve a constitutional purpose ... the dignity and honour of the Court can not be compromised because of it." The minority judgement also states that *"both the Act and Reference favour one religious community and disfavour another". Thus Hindu bias of the Government is condemned.*

2. The diversionary tactics of the Government as revealed by the following facts should be exposed.

Haunted by the economic crisis, the Government sought loan from the IMF and on November 9, 1981, a loan of 5 billion S.D.R., was approved. As the term of the loan, our Govt. had to accord special privileges to the private sector including foreign investors, to reverse the policy of import

substitution and allow import of such items for which we have adequate productive capacity in the country. During the period over which the loan was to be disbursed, *India would have no right to enter into bilateral trade agreement with any other country.* Thus IMF loan agreement involved a striking erosion of our economic sovereignty. Termination of the direct political rule of the British imperialists did not result in termination of our colonial status fully. In recent years, acceptance of Dunkel Draft and GATT regulations have accentuated our dependence on foreign loan.

In the agicultural sector, the per capita availability of food grains in 1988 fell from 458 gms to 442 gms in 1994. 48% of our total population are still below the poverty line. Currently our total foreign debt exceeds 92 billion and 30% of our export earning is spent as debt interest.

In view of such precarious economy of the country, our Government had no alternative to adoption of measures that would divert attention. The best way was to unleash communal hatred between Hindus and Muslims and that was not difficult to do.

It was Indira Gandhi who, for the forst time introduced the *use of religious saints in politics.* Aided by Zail Singh, a Sikh saint Bhindranwala was projected as the head of Sikhs but he ultimately turned into a leader of the secessionist movement in Punjab. In 1982, she could bag all the assembly seats in Jammu by playing the Hindu card. At that time she was supported by the RSS and its cadres worked for her. The BJP could not win a single seat in Jammu. Indira Gandhi divided the Jammu-Kashmir state into Hindu Jammu and Muslim Kashmir.

3. Since 1984, Hindu communal forces began to spread the following unsubstantiated false charges against the Muslims which should be condemned.

(a) *Muslim rule in India has been marked by the*

destruction of temples, abduction of Hindu women and forcible conversions:

The facts about the social and economic condition of Hindu subjects have already been discussed. The conoclastic behaviour of some of the Muslim rulers was not motivated on religious grounds. Repeated destruction of Somnath temple was undertaken to plunder the wealth contained inside the temple and idol itself. There is hardly any difference between a Hindu and a Muslim despot. Hindu emperor Samudra Gupta destroyed many Saiva temples and Buddhist monasteries and *king Harsha of Kashmir had a regular department for plundering temples!*

(b) *Muslims are appeased by the pseudo-secular Government:*

In the 10th Lok Sabha, only 9 out of 226 Congress M.P.s are Muslims. Public sector organisations for example, Tata Private Chemical do not have a single Muslim in its Board of Directors. The Minority Commission Report prepared by late Gopal Singh shows that in seventies, Muslims made up only 2.0% IPS, 2.86% IAS, and 3.3% Class I Officers.

(c) *Muslims of India are anti-national:*

Those Muslims who after Partition stayed in their ancestral home in India were not supporters of Pakistan. The rural Muslims without political consciousness have little to do with pan-Islamism. If Indian Muslims were disloyal, there would have been more spies but the reality is just the reverse. If they are conspicuously absent from the mainstream of Indian life, the fault is not theirs. Hindus, particularly the nationalist revolutionaries had kept them out. Rabindranth Tagore said: "I am speaking on behalf of Hindus. We should feel ashamed that we failed to establish comradely relation with them."

(d)*Muslims are fundamentalist, violent and indolent:*

Wherever Islam was introduced by the Muslim invaders

as in U.P., Muslims have a violent image but in the South where Islam was brought by merchants, the Muslims are not so. But even in the North where they came as invaders, the motive was not spread of Islam. They came in search of wealth and territories. There were few conversions by force and such conversions were in areas where there was a suspicion of a conspiracy of overthrowing the ruler. The forcible conversions were politically motivated. The overwhelming majority of converions to Islam was under the influence of Sufi saints who won the hearts of Hindu Sudras and Untouchables. In Bengal, they were first converted to Buddhism during the reign of Pala Kings and from Buddhism to Islam during the reign of Muslim Sultans.

(e) *Muslims in India are polygamous and have a higher growth rate:*

They are too poor to be polygamous but among them widow remarriage is in vogue. The higher growth rate of the Muslims had nothing to do with the practice of polygamy. Quite a lot of research has been undertaken by the Family Planning Department and it has been established that *higher growth rate in population is due to lack of education and poverty.* Illiterate rural people in our country consider that contraception is sinful and harmful for health. Even Gandhi opined: *"Union without the intent of procreation is sinful"!* According to 1961 census, polygamy is highest among the tribals and lowest among the Muslims. The historical significance of the Rarhi Brahmins did lay in their association with two of the most barbaric excesses of Brahminism in Bengal, the Suttee and the kulin polygamy. Kulin polygamy began to decline towards the second half of 19th century. It is well known that kulin polygamy ended as a result of economic causes and partly from the pressure of public opinion. Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's list of kulin Brahmins contains the names of 120 kulins and is

headed by a 55 year old Bandopadhyaya with 80 wives. The next, a Chattopadhyaya aged 64 had 72 wives. There were 4 others with more than 50 wives. Vidyasagar's statistics were taken between 1865 and 1871. *At no stage in history, Muslims were guilty of this vice.*

Following the demolition of Babari Masjid, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, avowedly a Hindu religious organisation, was banned for two years. 35 days after the expiry of the ban period, the VHP was banned for another two years. *The Government's four page order banning the VHP reveals the lack of courage in implementing its own decision.* The ban order observes that prominent members of the VHP, including those of the Marg Darshak Mandal, had been making statements which promote hatred between "different religious communities" even before 10 December, 1994, the day two year period lapsed. Following are the details:

On 25 June, 1993, Swami Parakshanand said at a meeting in Ayodhya that *it was a matter of pride that they had demolished the Babari Masjid.*

On 8 September, 1993, Ashok Singhal said in a public meeting at Ahmedabad that any mosque built in Ayodhya would meet the same fate as the Babari Masjid.

On 14 September, 1993, Ram Chandra Paramhans said during a Sant Sammelan in Ayodhya that *no Mazar (tomb) in India would be safe if the two mazars built in July were not removed from the acquired area.* He also asked the gathering not to tolerate "any mosque in Ayodhya as no religious practice was allowed in Mecca and Medina".

On 16 September, 1994, Acharya Dharmendra said in a public meeting that "talk of brotherly relations between Hindus and Muslims was not based on ground realities. While Hindus give cow milk even to snakes, Muslims eat the meat of the cow which gives milk."

The Government takes note of the Virat Hindu

Sammelan in Lucknow on 25 December, 1994, where Ram Chandra Paramhans exhorted the audience to bring back Kalyan Singh as Chief Minister of U.P. so that the mosques in Kashi and Mathura could also be demolished.

Ashok Singhal, Secretary General of VHP, at a rally in Delhi on 11 January, 1995 lamented that no political leader had come forward to apologise for the destruction of 20,000 temples in the past, even though they are insisting on aplologising for the demolition of Babari Masjid.

The Govt's notification also expresses concern over the VHP future plans which include holding a meeting of Marg Darshak Mandal in Allahabad in the last week of January to chalk out the strategy for the Ayodhya movement. "It is evident that the VHP intends to extend the sphere of activity in the immediate future so as to attain the professed objectives relating to shrines in Varanashi and Mathura", states the order.

Ashok Singhal asserted that they would still hold the meeting as scheduled in Allahabad where the VHP's future course of action will be decided. The mockery of Congress Government's actions against Hindu communal organisations openly defying the rule of law is continuing unabated.

In view of such blatant defiance of the Government orders by these socalled 'religious' fundamentalists why the notorious TADA was not applied? The reason is the fear of Hindu backlash. Even Pandit Nehru desisted from taking stringent measures against Hindu communalists. In Parliamentary Democracy, the number, irrespective of the quality, is all powerful; therefore *it is futile to fight against the scourge of religious vandalism through ballot box.* The present situation is increasingly becoming very favourable for the enemies of democracy, progress and welfare of the country. The VHP is banned but the meeting is called in the name of Marg Darshak Mandal. So the Government is

helpless!

Without a fundamental change in the political power in the country, no effective measure to curb the Hindutva fascist forces is possible. The votaries of civil liberty and human rights will never agree to deny 'democracy' to these forces guilty of worst crimes. They would be, however, helpful in creating public opinion against them. There can be no fundamental change without New Democratic Revolution aimed at the elimination of classes and class exploitation. *The battle against Hindutva fascim is a battle against class exploitation.* In comparison to the Congress, the BJP, political wing of the RSS, is less opportunist and more committed to certain principles. But the principles of the BJP are totally contrary to the values of democracy and humanism. A party with anti-democratic principles can be far more dangerous than a party given to opportunism.

While the Congress and other non-BJP parties have tried to take political advantages of the existing communal differences particularly those between Hindus and Muslims, the BJP deliberately fostered hatred towards Muslims. The Ayodhya controversy was really a non-issue for the people of India, but the BJP and its cohorts converted it into a burning issue by adopting a systematic and well designed propaganda programme. They organised numerous Shila Pujans in towns and villages and organised an impressive Ratha Yatra with idols of Rama and Sita for purpose of popularising the cause of constructing a Ram Mandir at the place where the Babari Masjid stood. This task was glorified as the liberation of Ram-Janmasthan.

Both 'Vedic Age' published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan and 'Cultural Heritage of India' published by Ramakrishna Mission testify that Rama is a mythical figure *(Story of Ramayana has no historical basis).* But BJP sadhus know the site of Rama's brithplace. Eventually they demolished

the Muslim shrine. In post-demolition riots, more than 4000 innocent persons lost their lives.

In fact, the movement started by the VHP, the religious wing of RSS Parivar, contains all the basic features of fascist movement. First, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar are aggressively communal, anti-Muslim particularly. Second, they represent chauvinistic nationalism. Third, their attitude is based on intense dislike and even hatred of the Muslim community. Fourth, they believe that might is right, which was demonstrated by their refusal to await the decision of the Supreme Court and insist that they are acting on 'faith' which was outside the jurisdiction of the judiciary. Fifth, their practice shows that they believe in the "theory of the big lie". They say, on the one hand that the Babari Masjid was not destroyed by them and on the other, the demolition of Babari Masjid was their greatest achievement.

All these five characteristics were found, though in a more formidable form, among the Nazis in Germany. The Nazis under the leadership of Adolf Hitler espoused chauvinistic nationalism and wanted Germany to be the ruler of the world. They hated the Jews just as the Sangh Parivar hates the Muslims. They despised those who were "weak and meek" and openly declared that might is right. They also believed in the "theory of big lie" which they knew to be more effective than a small lie.

The purpose of pointing out these similarities between the ideas and political practices of the BJP and the former fascist Nazis in Germany is not just to criticise the BJP but to emphasise that, *if BJP succeeds in coming to power at the Centre, its subsequent performance is likely to be similar to performances of Nazi fascists.* They will attempt to regiment the entire people by monopolising all the means of publicity and promoting the ideology of what is called Hindutva.

History would be perverted to show that Muslims were the cause of India's degradation. In fact, the BJP Government under Kalyan Singh did exactly that. Despite protestation to the contrary, by some BJP leaders, a virtually theocratic state would be established, and the state would use its powers to perpetuate itself. We have no doubt that the objective and political practice of the BJP are fascist and deserve to be opposed by all democrats and humanists. Compared to the Congress that is on the verge of disintegration, the BJP represents the greater evil.

All genuinely secular democrats must come forward to organise a broad united front against Hindutva fascism and save the country from being disintegrated into many independent sovereign states.

Conclusion

Religion has been a fertile ground for breeding exclusivity and communalism throughout history. It is therefore no surprise that the Hindus and the Muslims in India have stayed stuck in their separate communal confines inspite of sharing a common life together for centuries. The commonness of the habitat, habits, race, language, occupation and even economic and political interests could not overcome this in-built barrier and bring the two communities together in the same political organisation to fight for a common objective.

Even in the struggle for freedom against the common adversity of foreign rule, the leadership was provided predominently by the Hindu elite, and not by the Muslim counterpart. While the ideals of nationalism, of representative and responsible Government inspired the minds of the Hindu upper class which had taken to the alien but modern education, the dispossessed Muslim counter-parts turned their face against the new dispensation in sullen disdain and barren nostalgia. Meanwhile, the nationalist movement, the Swadeshi movement in particular, led by the Hindus inevitably came to acquire a distinct Hindu orientation with public observances of Hindu rituals and ardent adulations of symbols and heroes resurrected from Hindu heritage. During 1920's Hindu communal forces surfaced—Savarkar's Hindutva, activities of Arya Samaj and the formation of Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) in 1925 by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, following riots in Nagpur. Hedgewar was influenced by Savarkar's book 'Who is a Hindu' which propounded the view that the Hindus constitute a 'Nation'. The two nation theory was thus first formulated by Savarkar. *Pandit Nehru described RSS as the Indian version of Nazi party.* The fanatical frenzy of Hindu

revivalists even started dreaming of ushering a 'Hindu raj'. The Muslim reaction was predictably one of doubt and distrust in the very aims and objectives of the nationalist movement. The cleavage between the two communities in the political sphere was legitimised through the introduction of the principle of separate electorate and it continued to widen; eventually ratified by the Government of India Act known as "Communal Award".

As the movement for freedom gained momentum, the ruling power saw advantage in encouraging the communal divide. They manipulated the matters in such a way that eventually the Congress leaders including even Gandhi acquiesced Partition as demanded by the Muslim League. The result was: Muslims of India and Hindus of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) became hostages. Distrust between Hindus and Muslims remained unabated . Like Muslim communalism in pre-Partition India, Hindu communalism in post-Partition India is predominently political in content and form.

Hindu communalists enjoyed the favour of British patronage in pre-Partition India and of Congress patronage in post-Partition India. Congress is following an opportunist policy: in the name of secularism, pampering the muslim fundamentalists and exhibiting sham opposition towards Hindu communalists of RSS Parivar.

The socio-economic basis of communalism is undoubtedly the force of modern capitalism that accentuates the contradiction between the exploiter and the exploited. The introduction of 'Permanent settlement' system of land revenue collection by Lord Cornowallis in 1793 provided a golden opportunity to the Hindu merchants and traders to invest their capital in land and become Zamindars or land-owners cum tax collectors, from the peasant cultivators. In

1793, tax collected by the landlords amounted to Rs.318 lakhs wheras the revenue earned by the Government was Rs.286 lakhs. By 1904, tax rose to Rs.1472 lakhs wheras revenue rose to Rs 323 lakhs only. Thus the newly created Zamindars were getting richer at a very rapid rate but the peasantry became more and more debt-ridden. In 1929-30, the peasants' debt amounted to Rs. 100 crore and by 1934 rose to Rs. 210 crores. During the period of 1921-1931, the number of peasant cultivators increased from 18 lakhs to 27 lakhs while the number of landlords increased from 4 lakhs to 6.5 lakhs. During the period of 1939-1942, the number of land transfers increased four fold. And in 1943 occured the dreadful Bengal famine killing 3.5 million.

In view of the extreme pauperisation of the peasantry, the majority being Muslims and rapid growth in prosperity of landlords, majority being Hindus, contradiction between Hindu interest and Muslim interest became aggravated. Consequently, in Bengal particularly the cleavage became sharp and partition of Bengal occurred on the initiative of Bengali Hindus. Surawardhi was dreaming of an independent United Bengal but the Hindu upper class refused to be dominated by the Muslims. Partition of India was the Muslim demand whereas partition of Bengal was the Hindu demand. In both cases there was the *fear of the majority domination.*

In our acquisitive society, inequality in regard to economic status and education is bound to breed competition and rivalry and miniority would be at the mercy of the majority. Abolition of parivate property is the only remedy. In our country with different waves of migration from outside, the society became multiracial as well as multireligious from the earliest period of history. There were far reaching consequences of these migrations, both positive and negative, of the coming of Muslims into India. At one

level, there was rejection of Islam, while at another not only accommodation but synthesis or assimilation resulted. The Brahmins, by and large, refused to be drawn into the process of synthesis whereas the lower caste Hindus, particularly the untouchables either embraced Islam or accommodated in it to a lesser or greater degree. The former maintained that Islam is a closed religion and could not be integrated with Hinduism. Islam was considered to be a sectarian doctrinaire religion. The Muslim theologians, often part of the ruling establishment, also adopted a rigid stance towards Hinduism and dubbed Hindus as 'Kafir's (non-believers) with whom there could be no accommodation at the religious level.

The cultural and religious scene in India had been dominated by the upper caste Hindus. They kept the Muslims at a distance and considered them as 'Yavana's (foreigners). The Muslim ruling classes, on the other hand, in order to maintain their political and cultural hegemony, had to keep up religious indifference.

Brahmans and Rajputs who held high administrative posts during Muslim rule, had to collaborate with each other. Thereby evolved a sort of composite culture. The bulk of Hindus and Muslims were from the lower castes and classes. Their relationship was of assimilative nature. The lower caste Hindus found in Islam a liberating force and embraced it. For the Untouchables, it was no mean achievement that they could freely enter the mosque and pray standing in the same line with the upper class Muslims. Deprived of Sanskritisation, they welcomed Islamisation. These converts did not take a scriptural view of religion, rather they took a folk view of it. In this way Islam as well as Muslims were Indianised.

The Hindu Muslim relations are not governed merely by religious factors alone but more often by political and

economic development. The political contour is determined by the social changes brought about by the economic development. In other words, "Being determines Consciousness". Therefore economic development decides the pattern of behaviour and political perceptions. Thus it is the process of the development of means of production and the relations of production that are of decisive importance in determining Hindu Muslim relationship.

A positive growth of employment and of the income of the poor people will certainly create conditions suitable for secularism gaining strong ground. Land reform and universal literacy will go a long way towards creating condition for such growth.

Religious communalism in politics is the product of nationalism. Both Hindu and Muslim communalism are of simultaneous origin in the 19th century. Glorification of the past and eulogy of ancient heroes were used to inspire the people in nationalist movement. Nationalism was imported from the West during the British rule and Hindus taking to English education earlier, Hindu urban middle class grew earlier. So nationalism also found earlier expression among the Hindu intelligentsia. The younger Muslim intelligentsia reacted to Hindu nationalism by complaining against Hindu domination in the field of education in particular. The reality was the economic backwardness of the Muslims that was responsible for their overall backwardness. Advent of British rule was hailed by the Hindu leaders. Rammohan and Dwaraka Nath, the two doyens of modernisation in India regarded the British rule as a blessing. Even Karl Marx described British rule as an unconcious agent of progress in India.

Hindu communalism begot Muslim communalism. The first nationalist festival in Bengal was originally named as 'Jatiya Mela' but within 3 years its name was changed by

Dwijendra Nath Tagore, the President, to 'Hindu Mela'. Hindu Mahasabha was formed inside the pandal of the annual session of the Congress! The richer and more highly educated Hindu intelligentsia is primarily responsible for introducing Hindu label to all nationalist achievements. Hindu heroes, only those who valiantly fought against Muslim rulers were glorified. In text books of school students, all fables, folktales that glorifies Hindu heroes are there excluding those of Islamic heritage.

All political struggles are between haves and havenots. The haves of all hue take to any method that suit their objective but the havenots have only one method-class struggle to eliminate classes. Hindutva fascism has to be fought as a form of class struggle against Hindu and Muslim expoiters of religious sentiment to augment their hold on the political power. It would be futile to expect that any political party participating in Parliament and Assembly election will ever dare antagonising the religious sentiment of Hindu majority. Without structural change in the basic political set up, the menace of Hindu fascism will continue to haunt the country.

"My rebel self feels weary of war, but I will rest only when
cries of the oppressed cease ringing in the skies,
the sword of the oppressor does not rattle in the fierce battle field." ■

Kazi Nazrul Islam (Agni-Veena)